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THE
HUGUENOT FAMILY.

VOL. II.

THE
HUGUENOT FAMILY.

BY
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"CITOYENNE JACQUELINE,"
&c., &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE
HUGUENOT FAMILY.

CHAPTER I.

Lady Rolle's Advances to the Methodists.

BUT Lady Rolle had not buried herself in the country, even in the pleasant spring time, for the whim of ruralizing with an old Frenchwoman whom she discovered to be a *bourgeoise* counterpart of Madame de Sevigné. She had come for a much more serious affair, which tasked even her energies—to carry the election of her second son, who was opposed by one of the new men just then creating a scandal by quitting the aristocratic ranks, as the Fabian house quitted old Rome. Debouch-

ing boldly on the outskirts of the people, these new men sought to inaugurate a more modest and more magnanimous form of government, and entered passionate protests against the policy, common in its glaring selfishness, of Montagues, Newcastles, Sandwiches, Hollands, Stanhopes, and Townshends—declaiming loudly against the gross excesses and the mean rapacity of the governing families.

Lady Rolle was a woman to live and die by her order. She could not conceive another state of matters, or another set of sympathies; and while her candidate dawdled and dozed over patterns of brocade and chintz, and shapes of teacups and footstools, without animation and interest enough to attempt more than the vulgar exposure and trouble of his nomination, Lady Rolle drove about day and night in her laced head, her velvet hat, her dia-

mond stomacher, and her lutestring train.

“Never show face without your colours, my wenches,” she would advise her attendants, affably; “so you would awe the people, silence sauciness, and win the day. If I had stood in Queen Jezebel’s shoes, I, too, would have tired my hair and rouged my cheeks. But, look, that is what beats me and my parade hollow,” she would end, candidly pointing to Grand’mère, with her silver hair and her benign smile, her scoured and darned Lyons silk. “There goes one of nature’s ladies—God Almighty’s gentlewomen. He makes a few such in a century, and, sinner though I am, I know and honour them when I see them.”

Lady Rolle cajoled, bullied, bribed, and dispensed her threats, her promises, and her gifts. Even golden guineas slid into every convenient aperture, not to say impartially, but with little regard to expense.

“It is a dirty world,” she assured Mr. Philip Rolle, in answer to his remonstrances. “Keep your hands clean of it, Philip, if you will ; but we who rule by main force, by our mouldering monuments, crumbling charters, lands, moneys, and the left-handed grace of kings—we must dab our fingers in the dirt to clutch our rights, or let them go ; and if we only dab our fingers deep enough, by spending a score of thousands on our elections, like the Fitzwilliams and the Chandoses, aren’t we as proud as peacocks of our dirt? Better let go our seignorial rights than keep them at such a cost? No, sir, your cloth don’t above half think anything so unearthly. You leave that and other vagaries to my grand uncle, the venerable arch-deacon ; and I warn you in time it just caused the poor dear old man to escape being made a bishop. And with the men who deny the bishops—the Methodists whom

I've heard on the road to Tyburn as I've visited the French Prophets in Soho—I mean to try everything till I find them all a-wanting. If you have grown mealy-mouthed yourself, Philip, I'm sorry ; but I shan't give in to you. You are my cousin, my old friend, and spiritual director in a way : I don't dispute it ; but I snap my fingers at you in any other light ; for what on earth have elections got to do with church services, and sermons, and poor-boxes ? If you cannot be a man of the world, and aid me, pray mind your own business, sir. I shall fight my indifferent son's battles with the weapons which come to my hand, and these are coaxing, coercion, corruption if you please. None but a Rolle shall represent Reedham in the country's Parliament while there is breath in my body, or a man of the name above-ground to fill the seat."

The Rector fumed and fretted, and ate

out his stubborn, loyal heart, or flung it down for those jays, Lord Rolle and his brother, to hold their heads on one side, strut over, and deride. But Mr. Philip Rolle did not dream of forbidding his wife, and Dolly, and Milly to give their company and assistance to Lady Rolle in her close canvass. Ignorant innocents like them could know and understand nothing of political purity, civic claims, and the cowardlinesses and basenesses of men.

My lady would have taken up Yolande Dupuy also, and traded with her quaint seriousness and simplicity, and classic-like beauty, and her foreign words and ways, as she traded with the buxom, rampant Rectory girls; but happily, or unhappily, an instinct rather than Madame Dupuy's furious face, or Yolande's own recoil, arrested the proposal which, with its refusal, would have served betimes to break a spell; for Lady

Rolle was as incapable as a child of brooking contradiction, and Grand'mère would as soon have sentenced her child to the public pillory as have consented to such an exposure.

“What ! send a young girl to knot ribands, embroider scarfs, and pin them on parson and publican, to drink healths and be toasted back, bandy fairings, wheedle, importune? No, not to have transferred the triple crown, in figure, to the wasted brows of Jean Calvin.”

“But la !” cried Dolly and Milly, with crimson cheeks and flashing eyes, “whatever are you frightened for? We are safe when we are in my lady’s good company, even though we be followed and pulled sleeves for. The other side can do no more to trounce us, than groan at our bravery. Our very fellow, Black Jasper, doesn’t turn up the whites of his eyes one bit. It is not

as if it were a fire or an earthquake ; but, indeed, my lady tells us the pretty women up in London have caps made express to appear in at the street fires. And so small do they hold the earthquakes, which we two turned slug-a-beds for each time our Papa read about them in the news prints, that a mad wag went about t'other morning rapping like thunder with all the knockers, and bawling, 'Three o'clock, and a monstrous fine earthquake !' "

The ferment extended to Sedge Pond, and what with ringing of bells, galloping to and fro of messengers, watering of horses at the ale-house troughs, and the quenching of men's thirst at the ale-house barrels, the drowsy, miry, surly little village stirred and stretched itself.

"What a *bruit* ! Grand'mère, can anything on the earth be worth all this when the question is not of the world's jubilee ?

Goes it well with creatures who have souls to be saved to act as *gensdarmes* about Estates and Chambers? Parliaments! What miracles have parliaments wrought that men should make such ado about their own miserable voices in them?" asked Yolande, with a girl's audacious, vague austerity.

"Listen to the little fool!" cried Grand-mère, in lively impatience. "This *mêlée* may be unworthy, but all is worth which God gives man or woman to do, and among worthy deeds none is worthier than that which belongs to the fatherland. I tell you, Yolande, that because even good women are often sceptical and irreligious on the subject of the consciences of the men in politics and the government, the mothers and wives do much to render sons and husbands knaves and villains to the country. Ah! women do not comprehend politics;

government is not their province. But to help in honesty of view, in soundness of conviction, and uprightness of life in the men—that is the province of the women, as it ought to be their pride. Hold! the women will weep and break their hearts over the men's hardness, insensibility, and contumaciousness towards the outward constitution of a church, and the same women will be callous to mock at, and even try wickedly to subvert, the men's sincerity to the Spirit of God within them, in truth and devotion to their country. It is a case of 'This ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone.'"

"But what have men done in parliaments?" asked Yolande.

"They have done all, child—brought the freedom to worship God and to live at peace with men, and have broken the rod of the oppressor both in Church and State.

Learn to condemn and despise nothing but sin, my little one, far less the most sacred and the least selfish call to the righteousness, the wisdom, and the courage of the men. The sun of Ivry will shine like ten suns on that day—I do not say when no more fine ladies will drive their chariots over men's heads and hearts in what they call carrying the elections—but when the men will approach solemnly, reverently, earnestly, to give their votes, as though they were to take the holy sacrament; and when the women will look on with their hearts in their eyes, and pray humbly the while that the men may not be time-servers, double-dealers, hypocrites.”

The election was so far imperilled, though my lady would not allow it to be whispered, that she found it advisable to address herself to Squire Gage, who was out of the immediate neighbourhood, and

had no direct voice in the matter, but whose influence—not territorial or commercial, but personal and moral—was understood to be great.

Lady Rolle wrote what she called one of her scrawls, singularly characteristic in its handwriting, and very commanding in its solicitation. She craved permission to pay Squire Gage a visit at the Mall, that she might have the privilege of inspecting his princely charities as well as transacting a little business with him ; she begged him to set the time and promised that his time would be hers, but suggested that Tuesday, at three o'clock afternoon, would suit her best.

Squire Gage wrote back that he would be highly honoured by her ladyship's token of good neighbourhood, and by the condescension of her inspection of his poor premises ; but he was far from princely in his house-

keeping, whether in entertaining strangers or aught else. And because he hesitated to entrap her ladyship's goodness under false pretences, he must take leave to inform her, lest she should be incorrect in her judgment, that none of his property lay in Tynwald, and that therefore he was not in a condition to vote for her son; nay, in strict honesty he must tell her, at the risk even of losing her esteem, that, if he had been qualified, his sentiments would have constrained him to support the opposite candidate, Mr. Weatherhead.

“The rude old Methodist looks upon me as a liar, and says as much, and not in a very roundabout fashion either,” commented Lady Rolle. “I shall lie no more to him, at any rate!”

And she sat down and indited another scrawl, in which she simply made out, in the name of her son, Lord Rolle, a gift in per-

petuity, without charge or duty, of a piece of ground in the centre of Sedge Pond, with liberty to build thereon a Methodist chapel and Methodist preacher's house, such as could not be had for love or money nearer than the Mall.

The paper was returned by Lady Rolle's private messenger, with the words "Cancelled by mutual consent" written at the end, and with a slip of paper to the effect that Squire Gage was sorry to be compelled to decline her ladyship's liberality, but if he would not sell his political conscience for his own sake, surely her ladyship would not dishonour him, or any Gage of the Mall, by supposing that he should pretend to do it for God's sake.

"What! *does* the crazy old hunks pretend to be as pure as an angel?" cried my lady in a rage. "Folk used to call pretty witty Lucy Nenthorn, at whose feet my Lord Babington

laid his coronet, a divine angel, until she took it into her quick head that we were profane, and would have us call her a miserable sinner instead, and then she went off, like Selina Ferrars, as stark staring mad as this man whom she wedded. Well-a-day! they must have made a rare couple, a man and a woman like the rich young man in the parable—only that they did not go away sorrowful, but went and sold all that they had, gave to the poor, and followed their Master as they thought they were bid. Had they their price, I wonder? Were they never sorrowful after that sale? I'll be bound he would swear—Never. But the old fellow is as mad as St. Paul, and we are not many of us called to be saints, any more than angels. What do you say to it, Grand'mère Dupuy?" inquired Lady Rolle in the Shottery Cottage.

“I say that we are called to a higher calling, my lady,” answered Grand’mère, unexpectedly. “I read in my Bible, ‘Be ye perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.’”

“Ah! you are another of the saints,” exclaimed Lady Rolle, with a groan; “and, I confess to you frankly, my dear old Granny, that very likely I could not bear you and your extravagant goodness either—though I was once used to it from my dear, great, guileless old archdeacon, but that was an age ago—were it not that you are also French, and have a nice flavour of that saintly woman of the world, De Sevigné. Squire Gage is not at all of my sort, however; and I shall have nothing more to do with him.”

Notwithstanding this assertion, before the election was over Lady Rolle found herself in danger of being indebted to the good

offices of Squire Gage without the opportunity of repaying them.

A disorderly rabble was likely to be at Reedham on the day of the poll, vindicating their intuitive apprehension for their champion, and doing him and themselves the greatest disservice in their power by resorting to violence against the Castle party, and abusing their constituents. Lady Rolle, forewarned, could of course have procured the presence and protection of a detachment of soldiers from the next garrison town. But her pride revolted at the admission of her weakness in the very stronghold of the Rolles; her native courage rose single-handed to the contest. Like Maria Theresa, she was minded to trust to the mere sight of her, their liege lady, to quell all disturbance. Neither were Lord Rolle and his brother deficient in valour, and its better part, discretion.

It seemed to belong to the generation, with all its fearful temptations, that such men should fear nothing. And if they were pelted with dead cats, or even cut by stones, it would afford a little relief to the wearisome chairing and feasting—not an agreeable variety, perhaps, but still it was a change on the programme. And if the brutal rioters should be convicted and brought to justice—if anything like a murder had come to be committed, and anything like a hanging of the wretches took place, the suffering and doom would, of course, be their own business and their proper wages, but there would be a little interest and speculation for the witnesses. In the meantime, the Rolles rode with their pencils in their hands, ready to sketch any good effect of bridge or ruin which they might catch, their dice-boxes in their pockets, so that they might throw a

cast, and thus pass away an interval.

At this crisis Squire Gage volunteered a courteous, earnest assurance to Lady Rolle that he would come bound for her safety and comfort, as far as his poor means could extend. He would send his son to Reedham on the day of the election, to exert all his family and Methodist interest to keep the peace.

Lady Rolle had again looked in on Grand'mère, and was sitting with her in the arbour when the message reached her.

“Now, I say that Squire Gage is ready to lie like the rest, in order to keep himself, his son and heir, and his low fanatical body, out of a scrape,” cried Lady Rolle; “and the best of it is, what will you bet, but that he will fail us at a pinch?”

“I bet not, my lady,” answered Grand'mère, with spirit; “but I have so little fear that the good old Squire of the Mall,

M. Fléchier's friend and mine, will break his parole, that I engage to be there to see him keep it."

"Done, my dear goody," said Lady Rolle. So she made it a bargain, for she sought to swell her train by every art and element.

But Grand'mère only went to Reedham in a family party, with Yolande and Monsieur, and, from the windows of a mercer with whom the silk-weavers did business, she saw what took place in a quiet way.

Grand'mère had beheld before now displays of popular feeling, inconsiderate, unprincipled, dangerous, brutal; but never had she witnessed anything so unblushingly gross as the details of this national ceremony.

There were the men in smock-frocks and great-coats, and the women in rustic hats, torn caps, red mantles, green aprons, all

jostling each other, gesticulating, reeling, and rolling in the mire, with their banners, colours, and bludgeons, shouting till they were hoarse, blaspheming, squalling, and even braying.

On the outside was a ragged fringe of rioting and fighting soldiers and sailors who had been just discharged, squalid beggars, and the base scum of gaols. Then there were the central figures of the rival candidates, and the gentlemen on each side of the hustings making their speeches (with the uproar outside for a fitting accompaniment), swaggering, waving their glasses, laughing, yawning, dealing each other ruffianly blows, and exchanging cartels on the spot. There were the sheriff, the attorneys, and the clerks, having wigs, bags, and writs for their proper weapons, pouncing with craft and quibbles, but without disguise, on the voters, and plying them with all sorts

of cajoleries and bribes. But like the household at the Mall, the voter's roll included the blind, the lame, the fatuous, even the dead among its members, for there were not wanting brazen perjurers, who were caught holding up their hands and swearing to names the old owners of which were gone to answer to the roll-call of another assembly. At a conspicuous point was the Castle chariot, where my Lady Rolle sat, dominant and unmoved; and when a scowling face or an insolent finger approached her too closely, she faced it and caused it to shrink back before the sheer haughty majesty of her presence. On the seat opposite Lady Rolle, with their backs to the horses, were Dolly and Milly Rolle, fluttering their ribands, playing their fans, and tittering; in the excitement of the moment they hailed their acquaintances in the street and at the windows near them

(overwhelming Yolande Dupuy in the process), and never doubted the honour and the profit of the exaltation they conferred. They had no more thought of the mass of their fellow-creatures swarming round them than of the flies which the chariot wheels crushed in the dust. They were more insensible than Black Jasper, who glared about him in the seat with Lady Rolle's Basque, to whom he crept for fellowship and protection, in spite of the jealous, sullen temper of the flute-playing, half-savage mountaineer, whom neither the *salons* of Paris nor the gracious wiles of Grand'mère could propitiate and tame.

Grand'mère shut her eyes for a moment, shocked at that Reedham election, which was a grim and a grievous piece of satire for a Christian moralist to study; not the less grim and grievous that it was lighted up by streaks of splendour and grotesqueness.

But the next moment Grand'mère opened her eyes again, and looked abroad resolutely, wistfully, her grey eyes growing larger and larger, more tolerant and more pitiful.

“Galop time!” she murmured and thought, “it is not just to judge the gait by it, nor to take as the *bouillon* the mere boiling over of the pot. The pastor is there, though I see him not; erect as he is, less upright men bow and bend and hide him. There are other honest men, besides the pastor and Squire Gage, in the province—oh yes, hundreds of them, whose honesty will always be honesty, and not politeness, as it too often is. Yes, and their industry is labour, never intrigue. But they strike the clock with their vices, else I should not have to say to myself, Go, old Gèneviève, there are dozens of brave, pure Methodists down there unperceived in the *mêlée*. Bah! the vilest sin-

ner there is a brother, whom a true Methodist would own. Did I not say that the *haute noblesse* have their virtues also? They all love Madame de Sevigné, and each loves the friend of his heart fervently and faithfully, if they love not each other. For, alas! they say these poor great Rolles—my lord and my lady, and my lord and my lord's brother—do hate, not love each other, though they hold together when the common cause is in peril. Ah! well, that is something—the skeleton framework of regard, perhaps. And see, Master George spoke like a man once in his address, though he spoke the most of it so languidly, like a woman. It was—I know not at what, but he looked like a man and a gallant noble at the instant, and all the men on both sides held up their heads and hurrahed at the same time. That was magnanimous—that was fine—a redeeming touch, which

showed that they were not quite apes and satyrs. *Morbleu!* probably it was a defiance of us, poor dear French, in politics, though not in fashions, and an allusion to the French frigate on the slippery deck of which the sailor brother of the future member fell. Did these two brothers love each other in life, I wonder? Fie, fie! G enevi e, to put so cruel a question. Well understood! the Rolles are not vindictive; they are generous enemies to me and mine. At last, and on the whole, one must have much faith to meet such an experience as this at the market cross at Reedham. I am afflicted that I brought the child; yet, again, to ignore the wrong is not to efface it; far better to think of curing the mortal malady. So many centuries of Christianity, which was to make the world free indeed, and yet to be no nearer noble patriots, good citizens! *Mis ricorde!* shall it not be better

for the Greeks and the Romans, who never heard the name of Christ, than for the French and the English? What, after all these centuries, no higher motives, no sweeter manners, no gentler tastes! But it is necessary to watch and pray, that we may be able to tell them better things at Sedge Pond, to cleanse the floors of the ale-house, and to dethrone the beast which reigns there."

Yolande was standing by the side of Grand'mère, staring aghast, and still only half comprehending what she saw. All at once she blanched, flushed up, and drew back behind her protectress. A hoarser murmur and a rougher surge were rising and spreading over the mob, and Caleb Gage was visible all at once on foot, conspicuous in the middle of it from his velvet coat, shining buttons, and laced hat. He was alone there, so far as his class and his

party were concerned, and should the tiger humour which lurks in every riotous mob forget the merciful, kindly charity of the Mall, the Squire's son would be in greater danger than any man or woman present. He was not doing much, only turning a frank, open face in every direction, and elbowing his way here and there, speaking softly a quieting word now and then, and testifying how fully he trusted his neighbour.

While Caleb sought, by means so simple that a child could have used them, to curb the excited passions and calm the troubled spirits around him, an impulse was twice given to the brooding madness and crime which placed the peace-maker first of all in imminent jeopardy. His hat was knocked off by one of the rude and reckless hands always tingling to deal the initiatory blow in a fight—a fellow hand to those the Gages

had filled liberally in their day; and a watch-word was coined and circulated, red-hot and hissing from the primitive mint, "Trip up the spy, the turncoat!" But before the signal could be followed, and the tumult deepen into an uproar—while the girl whose heart the young man had stolen unawares did not guess by any instinct of woman's love the crisis through which they were passing, and while Grand'mère clasped Yolande's hand and prayed impetuously—Caleb Gage's blue eyes darted glances on every side like lightning, till they fell on welcome, homely features which he knew; and as he laughed in the forbidding faces of the raging crew who jostled against him, he challenged his man loudly and clearly:

"You, Toby, I know you wear a plaid night-cap below your fur cap, for I've seen it many a night when we've given you

lodging at the Mall ; lend a hand with your beaver here, till I can reach the mercer's."

"Loife and fortien, yes, measter, and the night-cap forby," Toby responded, loyally.

A false demagogue, whose breath was abuse and mockery, foreseeing the effect of the good office, tried to prevent it.

"You mean vermin !" he assailed the grateful Toby, by trade a travelling tailor ; "didn't he ask you to say your prayers afore he granted you and your goose a night's lodging ?"

"And could I ask him a better thing ?" Caleb appealed sharply to his audience ; "unless you, masters and mistresses, are all infidels together. If I had asked him to say his prayer to me, or even for me, Tap-room Teddy might have had some cause to find fault."

There came a half-doubtful growl of ac-

quiescence, rising into a louder, more decided growl of condemnation of the men who were molesting one of the Gages of the Mall, who, although they had the misfortune to be gentry, were genuine friends of the people, notwithstanding that they were strait-laced, psalm-singing Methodists. Let every man do what he had a mind to, was the rough and ready gospel of the Reedham election crowd, and it was not altogether un-English, nor altogether untrue, turbid as was its source. So that crisis was safely got over.

Ten minutes later, when the people had time to breathe again, an irregular skirmish of throwing filth and stones, possibly more offensive than formidable, was begun by what might be considered the marauders and skirmishers of both armies. But some gentlemen on the Rolles' side were rash and desperate enough to fire their pistols from a

window of the inn, wounding a guilty ring-leader and an innocent baby in a hapless woman's arms. On the hitting of the baby there was a roar from the crowd like that of the wind in a hurricane; and a rush so great was made towards Lady Rolle's chariot, that it swayed from side to side like a boat on the waves. The spirited horses struck out wildly; Dolly and Milly Rolle were smitten with senseless consternation, and would have leapt out, to certain destruction, had they not been forcibly held back by friends without. Black Jasper rolled his tongue like a mad dog, but did not attempt to copy his mistresses' example; while his comrade, the Basque, half opened his heavy eyes and mouth with a faint expression of gratification.

Caleb Gage, active and strong, fought his way to the step of the chariot, and stood between Lady Rolle and her assailants, be-

fore any gentleman could spring to her aid from the hustings.

But my lady rose to her feet, and exposing herself to friends and foes, turned a grandly firm, white face on them both. "I command that firing to cease; I shall hold that the next man who fires aims at me. Mob! do you hear that?"


"Ay, ay, we hear!" burst, as if irresistibly, from the mass. "You may be a Jezebel, but you are not the worst of your set, and they shannot make a scapegoat of you." And the fit of fury ebbed as rapidly as it had flowed. Then, taking advantage of its fall, the state of the poll was declared, and the Honourable George Rolle elected and chaired without further opposition.

"Ah! God be praised, there is one hero!" cried Grand'mère, moved beyond control. "Shall we grudge his heroism and disown it because he is nothing to us? We

are not so poor and miserable, and we too will be at peace, and claim the blessing of the men of peace."

CHAPTER II.

The Rolles at the Castle.

ADY ROLLE, having seen her son securely established in his hereditary seat, found herself in urgent want of a fresh object to work for, or a new cup and balls to play with. In the dearth of more exciting employments, she became gradually captivated with the dreamy foreign graces of Yolande Dupuy. At length she set her heart on having the girl in her own hands, to mould after her capricious notions, and to show about wherever she went. Such patronage of young girls was then the fashion. My lady Burlington and another fine lady had already electrified London

with the attractions of the Italian girl Violante, and with their fierce contentions as to which of them had the right to set off her fine house with the poor spoilt *protégée*.

Lady Rolle had similar inclinations and ambitions. She would supplement her own ascendancy over the great world, and amuse her own jaded sensations, by producing the dignified Huguenot beauty, and by watching the effect she would produce on the men and women who spent their days in seeking for some new thing, but ended them by flippantly proclaiming the doleful conclusion of Solomon, that there was nothing new under the sun, with the addition that neither was there anything high or holy, pure or true. She would see for herself what effect the corruption and infidelity of her world would have on a girl apparently so unworldly in nature and nurture as Yolande, and how far Grand'mère's

teaching would enable her devoted pupil to stand the test of temptation? And who knows but such treatment on such a subject would end in developing another unapproachable Delany or De Seigné? And should this be the result, surely society and posterity would owe gratitude to Lady Rolle for having brought to light, and drawn from a state of cloister-like seclusion, a nature so rich and so calculated to shine and to aid others.

Lady Rolle had a craving appetite to see the fruits of bitter knowledge. But along with this vain, tormenting curiosity, might there not be a better feeling, a yearning of the restless spirit for rest, a desperate impulse to recover what had been lost?

Proud as Lady Rolle was, and in a general way above disguise and subterfuge, she was yet forced to admit the existence of some obstacles to her will in the pursuit of

Yolande, and also to acknowledge some obligation to overcome them by lawful effort, some demand for stratagem and wariness in her advance to her goal. The abduction of a French Huguenot girl, for the girl's own good, might not sound a very alarming accusation against a woman of her rank. And she was shielded from some risks by her position as a peeress. But she was too wise to take any step that might lead to unnecessary scandal. Besides, Lady Rolle's fondness for Grand'mère, extremely fanciful as it was at first sight, did not prove on that account incapable of influencing her. So she commenced her operations with wonderful mildness and moderation, setting herself at once to captivate the occupants of the Shottery Cottage.

One individual there, however, resisted all Lady Rolle's superb arts. Grand'mère, Monsieur, Yolande, and even brusque Pris-

cille, succumbed one after another in a greater or less degree. Madame, and Madame alone, though she saw so short a way and with so concentrated a light, stood out, and declared war to the knife against her powerful and insidious antagonist, refusing absolutely to touch her gifts. Grand'mère contemplated the staunchness of her daughter-in-law with that mixture of reprobation and respect characteristic of the old woman.

Lady Rolle said nothing at first of her intention of carrying off Yolande from what she termed the living burial of a village life, and the wretched company (always excepting Grand'mère) of the refugee family. She did not breathe a whisper of her notion of training and tutoring the girl to become a young woman of the world. The great lady only languished over the impossibility of transplanting Grand'mère to the Castle, and

bemoaned the form and circumstance of her own high station. She was all for nature herself, but she was one of the *haute noblesse*, and must, therefore, submit to the destiny which had become a second nature to her. But her life was many a day a burden to her up at the Castle. Would not Grand'mère allow the *petite* to help her sometimes with her shell-work and embroidery, and keep company with her and her young country cousins Dolly and Milly Rolle, who were not over-wise, and who distressed her often by their bouncing ways, but who meant no harm, and were virtuous young women, to whom she had a mind to do a good turn for the sake of their name and her old friend their father? But indeed to please herself she would far liefer do a good turn to Yolandette. And she would take the greatest care of the dear innocent child, who would be as safe as if she were under lock

and key at the Castle. And her sons were men of honour, who would hold their mother's protection sacred and sure ; and then, too, they had a huge admiration for Madame de Sevigné, and intended a brotherly kindness to Yolande.

Now these persuasions of Lady Rolle, aimed as they were at Grand'mère's weakness, had their due effect. Grand'mère was daring from the absence of suspicion rather than timid from the presence of caution. She tenaciously held to the noble dogma, "To the pure all things are pure." She was to some extent mystified and bewildered between the different customs of France and England. She loved the customs of her dear France, but then she was reasonable and sensible, and was willing that concessions should be made to the standard and practices of the country which had adopted her, and in which her descendants would

be naturalised. She had always held it desirable for Yolande that she should have companions of her own age and condition, and had already promoted her grandchild's familiarity with the Rector's daughters. She did not think that great people who could be so kind as to entertain such a just preference for Yolande could be very wicked.

It was from no servile homage to rank, then, but rather from the excess of faith and charity, and from the confusion of conflicting impressions, that Grand'mère was led off her feet by my lady. She was not only above everything mean and sordid, but by temperament was decidedly *romanesque*, and she had at the same time the safeguard of having all her antecedents, traditions, and tendencies thoroughly *bourgeoise* and Huguenot.

As a climax, there was the furor into which Grand'mère had suffered herself to be

worked about Madame de Sevigné, so that she actually came to see in Lady Rolle, not a woman devoured by ambition, and living in pleasure and self-gratification, at once unstable, relentless, and fickle, but a candid, tender-hearted Madame de Sevigné, who, in her compulsory worldliness and parched thirsting after better things, would receive an innocent, devout young girl as a stream in the desert, as an angel of light. What wonder that Grand'mère, in her enthusiasm and her tendency to self-sacrifice, authorised Yolande's going to the Castle.

For Monsieur, he promptly enjoined that Yolande should wait on the great lady whenever the great lady wished it ; and in France a father's will was always regarded as law.

There remained then only poor Madame in a weak minority. She was violently disgusted at the intercourse between the

Cottage and the Castle, as she had been at that between the Cottage and the Rectory. And she was too much of a Cassandra to do anything except to prophesy inevitable evil. She was always barking, but did not bite. Like many violent women, she was undone by her own violence; for, after all, she exerted less rule over her own family than most meek-tempered, quiet-spirited women do. She had no talent for classifying offences, or for tracing their relative consequences. Rude and blustering, she rolled them all together, and hopelessly massed and confounded them. Her daughter's going to London into the great world might have opened her eyes as with a shock, but Yolande's going a mile's distance to the Castle was but another version of the apostasy of her being permitted to visit at the parsonage. Madame saw in both the same danger to Yolande's state of perfect tutelage

and to her French Calvinism ; and nothing farther.

So Lady Rolle succeeded in making the first breach in her assault on the stronghold of the Dupuys.

Yolande went up to the Castle in the early spring, while the surly east winds were nipping the blood which had its source in hearts that had been accustomed to beat full and free under the warm southern sun. She went before even the primroses, which Grand'mère herself acknowledged were the colour and shape of the stars, began to bud in yellow lustre in the miry lanes. Had these fresh and dewy primroses been conveyed to Covent Garden—not the honest market, but the glaring, dishonest threshold of the foot-lights—they would not have undergone so great a transition as was in store for Yolande.

It is hard for us, in these days, to realize the extent of the change. Times are altered, the tone of the world is modified, and over the old hideous heartlessness and infidelity, where they still continue to exist, a decent cloak is drawn.

It was not that poor Yolande became a scared eye-witness of crimes. The boorish folks of Sedge Pond, whose dull imaginations required strong figures to be reflected in their stagnant waters, mumbled of ghastly crimes which had been committed at the Castle of the Rolles; but if these sluggish mediums had not returned enlarged and distorted images of the facts, Yolande only saw life at the Castle in its normal condition, and that was simply bad.

In fine, Yolande was removed from the Shottery Cottage, where there was suffering for conscience' sake, involving its degree of nobility, and what remained of its lofty prin-

ciple ; where everybody “made the amiable” save Madame, and everybody else bore with Madame, and recognised that her feverish fretting and gusts of passion had their origin in duty. Even in its outer courts, where its spirit had sustained the greatest eclipse, the Huguenot family retained the lingering stamp of much that was honourable and excellent. But Yolande had been privileged to abide in the inner court, spirit to spirit with the beautiful nature of an old Christian gentlewoman, whose heart had been mellowed, sobered, and rendered sacred by age, and who was at once high and humble, wise and simple—yet wonderfully penetrating, clear, and resolute, as well as large-minded.

And so with the print of Grand’mère’s character impressed upon her, and Grand’mère’s fragrance hovering about her distinct individuality, and promising for it a

benign summer and autumn, Yolande went up to the Castle, sharing in the generous, gentle delusion of meeting the representative of Madame de Sevigné. She was something wholly fresh and piquant there. And she thrilled and palpitated, not so much like a young candidate of forgotten chivalry, or an art-student of what was one of art's seasons of enthrallment and degradation, as like a neophyte of the one church invisible, intrepid in the sublime anticipation of saving souls and in the charity which covers a multitude of sins. In the great white Castle, with its vast front and its outworks of pillars, she encountered, with only a mile of park between her and the Shottery Cottage, the great castle giants.

We must hear a little more in detail what Yolande went up and met. We may despair of quite understanding the position ; at the same time, we ought to thank God

that we can no longer breathe so unhallowed an atmosphere.

Yolande found a great, splendid house, swarming with idle retainers and spoilt servants, where there was neither fear of God nor devil, though there was in it a poor, trodden-down clergyman, Mr. Hoadley, who, as domestic chaplain, read prayers and preached when he was requested, just as he would cut up a haunch of venison, or hold a hand at piquet. Cards and dice were not, in the view of the Castle grandees, the mere tickets and dominoes with which Monsieur and Grand'mère would wage an elaborate war in order to be social, and to entertain each other. They were the promissory notes and stakes of sums great and small; for gambling was the one common interest inside the Castle, as horseflesh was with the men, and, to a certain extent, with the women, outside the Castle. No rank

of the occupants, no storey of the building, made any difference. Cards were the main object, and from the great drawing-room down through the servants' hall to the scullery, all was set out for play.

Yolande saw, too, the most senseless waste of victuals, batches of bread, blue and green with mould, being tossed into the red gulfs of the kitchen fire. And what Grand'mère would have called "the poor dear innocent pigs," were fed on roast chicken and *blanc-manger*; while Lord Rolle was in such chronic distress for money, that each rent-day his agent had no choice but to distrain for rent even in the saddest circumstances.

And Yolande saw the company that came to the Castle: magnificent fine ladies, only more elaborate, and more countryfied in their magnificence than my lady; and gentlemen of repute, less finished than my lady's sons, but heartier in their coarseness.

And unless the visits chanced to be in the form of morning calls, the company uniformly fell into the family ways of gross eating, hard drinking, and high play.

The conversation at the Castle exhibited in perfection a dilettantism without either heart or soul, a half real, half feigned foppishness and squeamishness, a fidgety, conceited fondness for spurious art, and such vile insinuations, that it was happily impossible for good people even so much as to comprehend the *double-entendres*. All over the Castle such conversation was more or less current, down even to Dolly and Milly Rolle, who attempted to harden themselves in order not to blush at broad inuendoes or wanton insults, and even tried to retail them with their own foolish lips. It must be understood, however, that life at the Castle had gone from bad to worse since the Rector's youth, and that, not caring to

spend much of his time there in later days, he was uninformed of the extent and the nature of the degeneracy. Had it been otherwise, he would surely not, even in spite of his feudal allegiance and bygone kindness for my lady, have taken the moths to the candle, and placed his facile daughters in the sounding halls and corridors.

Yolande could not discover, listen how she might, in all the wilful trifling, in all the malignant talk misnamed shrewdness, in all the poor faded mimicry of the *naïveté* of Madame de Sevigné, that any man or woman at the Castle believed in anything, or trusted in anybody, or had any God in the wide universe but his or her own pampered, disappointed, pigmy self. None of them could look backward to sweet wholesome memories, or forward to brighter, better hopes, but must cleave to and batten in their fool's paradise.

Brought up in the strictest school of discipline and duty, and as ardently attached to Grand'mère as a lover to his mistress, Yolande was perplexed beyond measure to find that the great Rolle family had now reached that pitch of reprobateness recorded against the Romans of his time by no less a judge than St. Paul when he said that they were "without natural affection." Lady Rolle had brought herself to look on her son and heir, Lord Rolle, who had been her suckling child, as her rival and enemy; my lord regarded his mother sullenly as an interloper and incubus; and each entertained towards the other jealous suspicion and cruel hostility, which they did not trouble themselves to hide, and which, like consuming lava streams, were continually bursting through the icy coating of their ceremonious politeness.

As to the frank and fond kinship of bro-

thers, it was unknown at the Castle. The Honourable George Rolle bore a bitter spite against my lord; while he returned the favour by grudging his cadet every advantage which he could not prevent him from obtaining, and by repaying himself in pinching George so far as he dared in his birthright, and playing him false whenever an opportunity presented itself. The great link between the two brothers was the necessity for combining against the domineering temper and eccentricities of their mother. What their cunning selfishness told them was a benefit to both, and an aid to their common bent in luxurious effeminacy and savage insensibility, they readily enough combined to gain; but there was no sweet affection, no patience, no trace of real esteem or self-denial in their relationship.

In theory, Yolande went to the Castle to

lighten the great lady's pomp, strife, and weariness by faith, love, and peace ; to nestle near her, look up to her, and wait upon her with such reverential pity and tender devotion that the wasted heart might be won back to God, and to good dispositions and good works.

But in reality Yolande went there to help Dolly and Milly Rolle to keep my lady company. She was seated at the foot of the table or the draughty side of it, and helped last at dinner and supper, along with Mr. Hoadley and Dr. Spiers, the chaplain and the physician. She was expected to withdraw into window recesses and vestibules, or to betake herself to the house-keeper's room, and the society of Mrs. Mann and Mrs. Sally, when more suitable company offered itself.

Yolande found the troops of servants saucy and insolent ; they lied to her, and

they attempted to filch from her the few precious things she owned—such as Grand-mère's miniature in enamel, and one of those doves in gold which the Huguenot women substituted for the crosses of the Roman Catholics. This, to the confounded, grieved girl, who had known nothing but the kind scolding, the blunt truthfulness, and the loving care of lynx-eyed Priscille, was in itself a perplexity and a pain.

Mr. Hoadley, in or out of his cassock, and Dr. Spiers, in his green spectacles, did not work any harm to Yolande, save what came from the sight of the troubles and hardships which engrossed them. But Dolly and Milly Rolle were now woefully changed towards her. Their capricious friendliness to her had become coldness and dislike; and no wonder, for they were mortally jealous of Yolande's joining them as a com-

panion to my lady. They persecuted her, stealthily and stingingly; they misconstrued everything she did, every early walk she took in the park, every lily or carnation she sewed in my lady's embroidery, every psalm of Marot's she sung at Lady Rolle's request to lull her asleep. The very details of Yolande's unchanged dress—the long-waisted, sage-coloured Lyons silk, and the cap, which was chiefly a bow of riband above the roll of hair, so sober and sedate in its one bit of bright colour—afforded ground for their raillery. The sisters winked at her, whispered about her, and spoke of her in jibing, bitter speeches. Indeed, they were rapidly advancing to plot her destruction, and to consummate her disgrace and expulsion.

Lord Rolle and his brother were not such strangers to a gentleman's code of honour, worthlessly elastic as it was then, as not to

hold their mother's house in some sort a sanctuary to girls like the Rolles of the Rectory and Yolande. They only startled and distressed Yolande by calling her to her face "little Dupuy," and saint this and saint that, and by attempting to hoax her as egregiously as they hoaxed the Rolle girls on the last court fashions. Afterwards they would laugh inordinately in spite of their habitual languor, and proclaim the girl's credulity in every company when the imposture was detected. They affronted the shy French girl by, at one moment, claiming small services at her hand, and by carelessly neglecting to pay her small services in return at the next. They horrified her by asking her to remember them in her prayers, and by affording the clearest evidence that they were scoffing at all prayer, and at the great Prayer Hearer.

So there remained only Lady Rolle to

atone for these outrages on Yolande's principles and feelings ; but that unhappy, infatuated woman, after having with the utmost solicitude enticed and decoyed Grand'mère's child into her power with some faint thought of, and longing after, better things, only made matters worse. In her country-house, away from such distractions as she clamoured for, and with her vices and her tyranny goading what was capricious in her, her revengeful excesses broke out in their native deformity.

The Rectory girls could look on at my lady's gluttony and its appropriate qualifications of doses and drops, and her furious card-playing. They could listen to her conversation when it waxed most scurrilous. Nay, left to themselves, they would learn to fish for tidbits, to borrow Mrs. Sally's drops in order to comfort their own oppressed stomachs, to stake their last half-guinea of

pocket-money, and to withdraw into retirement, when they could be spared, to employ their time in vain attempts at concocting the washes and paints of a fine lady. They could even harden themselves to endure taunts and abuse, when Lady Rolle, who with all her knowledge and high breeding was more ignorant than a savage of the obligations of hospitality, turned upon them in sheer weariness and frowardness. They could think it all made up by the honour of appearing in public as Lady Rolle's kinswomen, by receiving copies of the fashions from her maid, or a set of ribands, or "a head," or a habit, from her scornful prodigality.

Yolande Dupuy bore all this for three days and nights, and on the fourth morning she rose before it was break of day and fled back to the Shottery Cottage for the life of her soul.

She appeared like a ghost in Grand'mère's room, as the old woman, in her *pélisse à capuchon*, was placidly watching her morning fire in a brasier on a tripod, and perhaps pensively wondering whether her child, rising to the splendour of such a life as that of Marley or Chantilly, was at that moment donning her armour and unfurling her banner faithfully, like another Pucelle; or whether she was reading her Huguenot lesson, which had been oftener read in cellars and garrets, in prisons and marshes, than in halls and castles.

“Grand'mère, take me into shelter again,” Yolande began to implore in disjointed petitions. “The world is too much for me. But I know well what you will say: ‘Judge not, presumptuous one; are there not seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal! And how will the good salt the earth, if they dwell for their own profit and

pleasure in the desert?' There are no retreats for the Huguenots. I know it well. But, *ma mère*, I am a silly, feeble child, and not a wise, valiant woman; I dare not longer abide in Sodom. Ah! pardon me, pardon me, I did not mean to judge and condemn. Mamma had reason to fear for me. If it has not made me wicked, it has tortured me, and shaken my faith in God and man. It is necessary that I say this, and then I will be deaf and dumb; for I did not go up among the strange quality at the Castle, who are good to you, and who thought to be good to us, to be a spy and a traitress in the camp. But what will you? I should love better to be the dogs of the gentlemen than of the dame; for the sacrilegious men can be more just than the great lady, though, alas! she loathes herself above all in the world."

"I beat my breast, I tear my grey hairs,

I die with shame for my folly !” And Grand-mère fell back, almost suiting the action to the word. “Hein ! what is the price of my grey hairs, that I should put them in the panier ? Is the time come when the child shall lead the lion, and the lamb put its hand on the cockatrice’s den, without mortal injury ? What are to me the risks and the errors of Madame de Sevigné ? Away with her ! she is at home ; her body sleeps, these fifty years, in the vault of her chapel, her spirit is with her God. And it is for her phantom, her shadow, that I expose my little daughter, the daughter of my son. I have been a weak, vain, old sinner to venture Yolande where I could not go and spy the land for her. She scorns the spies in her innocence ; but there are righteous spies, as there are righteous executioners. The punishment is my portion, my desert ; let me only suffer it. Grant, good Lord, that

it be to me alone ; as for this sheep, save that she is of my house, and the ewe lamb of my old age, and hath obeyed me, what hath she done ? And the fine lady, whose impulses were not all ignoble I believe, the unhappy woman who has worked nothing but mischief—shall we not pray for her also, that there may be room found for her repentance—we who so much need repentance ourselves ?”


“Grand’mère,” said Yolande, hanging her head and speaking below her breath, “why is it that the men and the women for whom our Saviour died are left to believe nothing, to hope for nothing, and care for nothing, like these mocking gentlemen and that poor raging lady ?”

“It is a mystery,” answered Grand’mère, solemnly and pitifully ; “and it is the more awful that they have wilfully and desperately shut themselves out. But the hand of

the Lord can burst even their locks and bars, and show them a grand contrast,—the twelve gates of heaven, which are not shut either by day or by night, because there is no night there.”

CHAPTER III.

*His Reverence Mr. Hoadley, and His Honour
Mr. Lushington.*

OLANDE'S flight from the Castle was followed by no domestic results beyond the penitence of Grand'mère. Monsieur was at the time absent on one of his periodical visits to London; and as for Madame, she did not deign to acknowledge the return of the wanderer by anything farther than—

“Child, you are come back; you did not find it so good to be wrapped up in furs and fed on *blanc-manger* without the blessing of the Lord. For that you may thank your

Huguenot ancestors, your catechism, your Grand'mère and me, who have taught you better."

Then she retired into her closet and thanked God with passionate fervour for her daughter's escape from the snare of the fowler.

Priscille only limped grumblingly after Ma'mselle, who had come back as white as a jasmine for all her feasting. What chiefly vexed her now that Yolande had returned was, that the clear-starched neckerchiefs and aprons she had got up with so much care that Ma'mselle might not be behind the Rectory girls, had been unused and wasted, and not only that, but she was ready to go bound that her work had been lost, or lent to these very madams. There was not a whisper of Ma'mselle's having been plagued out of her life by the admiration of the Mohocks of fine gentlemen, though Pris-

cille had no doubt it was from them that Yolande had run away. It served the cocks of the quality right, she thought, to have their combs cut a bit. Indeed Priscille would have thought herself indemnified for her trouble if she had but heard the fine compliments which my lord and his set must have paid Ma'mselle, and the splendid offers of carriages and six, and marriages in Fleet Street, which they must have been driven to make her. She would then have had the satisfaction of telling the girl that they were rank lies and base plots. And although she could not tell whence was to come Ma'mselle's share in the nettle-soup and gilt chicken that day, she looked straighter forward out of her near-set eyes than she had lately done, and thought, without admitting it to herself, that Madame was like herself again, and would not any longer pine away in her brightness and sweetness. Having now re-

covered her little bird, to incline its head and trill fitfully in its pensive, intensely-earnest youth, among the ass's pepper and spiked lavender of her garden, Priscille felt that Grand'mère would live twenty years longer. The Shottery Cottage was more like itself to Priscille again, with youth in all its inexperience and impatience, going about finding fault, wondering why wrong existed, and when it would be righted, and indeed making farther wrong by its rash enthusiasm and half-frantic efforts at the world's reformation. Gruff, practical Priscille would do just as she had done before. She would scold, turn into derision, and lay up and cherish in her heart the waywardness of her young mistress. And so she resumed the charge of Yolande's little wardrobe, and beseeched and bullied Grand'mère for the daintiest fripe in her cupboards for Ma'mselle's bread.

But if there were no results at the Cottage, there certainly were at the Castle. Even before my lady, a little stunned with incredulity at the independence and ingratitude of her *protégée*, had swiftly recovered herself, and before Lord Rolle and the Honourable George had looked up from their study of bric-à-brac and heraldry, basset and ombre, two emissaries arrived at the Shottery Cottage to learn what mischief was in the wind, and to give Mademoiselle Dupuy and her friends a more or less disinterested hint in time.

The first-comer was my lord's chaplain, Mr. Hoadley, who looked up a quotation or a learned authority, rode a spare hunter, and took a hand in a round game, as well as said grace when he was allowed, and read the service on a rainy Sunday, or on a morning or evening when it pleased my lady to get out of bed, or go to it, with the

blessing of the Church upon her head. When Mr. Hoadley was out of his cassock he was no more like a clergyman than Lord Rolle, and he was in reality what the dregs of his private conscience and the remains of public decency left him. He was a man under thirty years of age, was dressed in a shabby brocade coat, with shorts and rolled stockings, and the ordinary triangular little hat. His face, which was clean shaven, would not have been ill-looking, if it had only been as open and clear as it was soft and delicate. He entered the women's room at the Shottery Cottage, with a fine show of conceit and affectation, and a well got-up strut and ogle, after having himself been squinted at disparagingly by Priscille, all the way from the garden gate. With the spasmodic effort of a man by nature shy, and accustomed to be put down, he announced that he was come to wait upon

Mademoiselle Dupuy, and pay his humble respects to her and any of her family who might be at home, and to ask, in the name of all that was prudent, why she had bolted from my lady's gracious protection.

Goaded out of her self-conscious reserve, Yolande answered, "I have my reasons, which I am sure you could not comprehend, Mr. Hoadley. Pardon me; I know quite well what I am about. Have the goodness to render my duty to my lady, and tell her that I will always do what she wishes in the embroidery and the psalms here, but that I will never return to the Castle."

His reverence was so unclerical as to whistle a bar of "Nancy Dawson" at Yolande's answer, and so unmanly as not to pay the smallest heed to it.

"What do you say to the chit's contumacy, madam?" He addressed Yolande's mother, who was scowling at him with a

fierceness compared with which Priscille's squint was mild and kindly.

“I say that my daughter shall not return to the habitation of wickedness and idolatry, unless she have a desire to make a holy triad with Mesdames Delilah and Jezebel,” returned Madame, with the air of having triumphantly disposed of her adversary.

“Marry, come up!” exclaimed the self-constituted ambassador, by no means discomfited by the attack, effeminate and irritable though he was. Madame's passion, as was its wont, had outshot its mark and rebounded with the baffled absurdity of a spent ball. “Mademoiselle was so obliging as to tell me that I do not comprehend the mighty offence; and truly I do not. I am such a poor creature in my good nature that I could not help looking in upon you to warn you that if a nest of foreigners persist in being humorsome to my wor-

shipful patrons, they may find themselves turned adrift without being fledged; that is all. And methought you French were more attentive to the opinions of your priests, Catholic and Protestant, than our English are to us."

With that Grand'mère rose, and with all the dignity of her years and experience, curtsied to the young man in such a manner as forced him to rise up from where he had been lolling upon the settee, to make her a sprawling bow in return.

"Yes," said Grand'mère, "we honour our pastors, and that is well, for they are the shepherds and we the sheep; and it is true that our pastors have not failed in following the Good Shepherd. Monsieur must at least have heard that our pastors have died with their sheep, and have sealed their 'I believe' with their blood. But, Yolande, why did you not tell us that

Monsieur was a priest? How good it is of Monsieur to come out after a little strange lamb as he has done. Philippine, there is a sleeve of the coat of a true pastor. Not true, say you? Can you not see it, my love, although it is not the wing of a Geneva cloak."

"Eh?" questioned Philippine, gloomily. "In a *flandrin*, a *damoiseau*? Believe it not, *ma mère*; there is a serpent hid under the rock."

"Never mind her, Monsieur," explained Grand'mère, placidly, "she is honourable to the tips of her fingers; and if she cannot see the comparison she will not say she sees it, and so she scolds, but her scolding is wholesome as the bracing wind. It is for me to explain and thank you, Monsieur my Pastor, when we can offer you no recompense, for Yolandette is nobody,—a rude lamb who bounds to her dam, shaking

her tail and bleating pitifully. Ah ! my young pastor, Yolande is but a silly lamb, only wise in knowing that in her simplicity and weakness she might stray quite out of the fold. She is not, like you, a consecrated, ordained young servant of God, to resist and rebuke evil and dwell among it unscathed ; and so she beats a retreat, and lets her just fears chase her out of that Vanity Fair of which your great English Fénelon, Bunyan, has written so well. Is it not so, Monsieur ? And are you not proud of your Pilgrim ? ”

Mr. Hoadley stared at Grand'mère, his hollow black eyes wide and his mouth open.

“ Consider what unpardonable wrong I should do,” continued Grand'mère, “ what giddiness and folly an old woman of fourscore years would be guilty of, if I sent her alone with her roll back to the Vanity Fair

from which her ancestors a century ago fought their way in blood and fire. Consider it, my generous young pastor, you who had some care for the strange lamb. I am sure that you will be glad the scared little creature had the discretion left to take opportunity by the forelock and leap the city wall, and that you will no longer seek to catch her and carry her back."

"Sure, you mock me, madam," Mr. Hoadley stammered.

"Monsieur le Pasteur!" exclaimed Grand'mère, in unmistakeable surprise and pain, and for the first time taking a step back from the visitor.

"Then what do you take me for?" he inquired hastily.

"For a young Timothy, please God," declared Grand'mère, wistfully; and then she added, in a lower tone and with exquisite tenderness, "Had he not his youth, which

he was to permit no man to despise? Ah! that had been a difficult charge had he not been the scholar of an inspired sage. He had his infirmities of body, too, and I fear that you suffer also, my son."

"I suffer in my soul and conscience," cried the young man with trembling, passionate lips. "I am no such vile hypocrite as to lend myself to an act of imposture. Mademoiselle here must have told you that I am a miserable wretch, a priest all but forsworn; and wherefore do you thus convict and crush me with the shame of a false character."

"It rests with you if it be false," remonstrated Grand'mère, gently. "Go, you came not to me with a false purpose," she argued, with penetrating charity in her motherly grey eyes.

"No, upon my life!" he said, eagerly confirming her assertion. "I had an honest

thought of doing a good turn to the modest Mademoiselle, who is very different from the foreign gentry I have known at the Castle. God help me, for I might have seen farther. But I say now you are perfectly right, madam. Keep your innocent maiden out of the garish light yonder, out of the awful selfishness and desperation, though you should have to lock her up with ten locks and keys, and even though my lady should turn you out of house and hold. She is a bountiful patroness, but her ‘tender mercies are cruel,’” he ended, with a spasm on his white face, as he took up his little hat.

But Grand’mère, by her sympathetic words and soft questions, constrained him to sit down again, and caused him to cover his face with his hands, and to betray his black eyes moist as well as hollow when he removed his fingers. He kissed Grand’mère’s

hand; the wonder was that he did not fall on his knees before her.

Mr. Hoadley's greatest sin was that he was a moral coward; and he was no worse than his class, except that such cowardice in a man who held his office was more degrading than in any other. His life had been a hard and corrupting one, and there was even some room for marvel in the fact that he had been saved from utter destruction and downright infidelity. A clever but weakly excitable man, he was very ready to receive impressions and take on hues from the men and women around him. Curbed and generally kept down, on the smallest encouragement he fell naturally into the noisy candour of the period. He reproached himself in presence of the three women, two of whom had never seen his face before; he confessed his errors; and he told his history.

But after all it was only to one benevo-

lent, godly old woman—reverent in her age, godliness, and benevolence—that Mr. Hoadley spoke. Madame Dupuy did not understand more than one out of a dozen words he said, so dismissing him from her thoughts she wove her lace and returned to her habitual meditated refrain on the sorrows of the Huguenots and the hardened worldliness of Monsieur. Yolande, after Mr. Hoadley's first personal allusions were made, slipped out of the room, and took refuge with grumbling Priscille, feeling no regret for the loss of a tale which she was tempted to undervalue. Pity is akin to scorn as well as to another quality; and Mr. Hoadley was too mendacious in soliciting pity, and too much occupied with his own troubles, to attract either light or lofty-hearted girls. Only Grand'mère listened to his narrative with unwearied patience, relieved by occasional pinches of Spanish snuff. In meeting his

avowals, she guarded his self-respect more jealously than he himself did, and soothed his hurt feelings and wounded vanity while she faithfully probed his conscience and enjoined amendment at any cost.

Mr. Hoadley, in place of being related to the famous Bishop of the name, was the son of a poor clergyman who had barely managed to educate his son for the Church. Just as his university career was ended and he had taken orders, his father died, leaving a widow dependent on her son's exertions. There were but three fields open for him—to starve in a Grub Street garret, to be an usher in a school, or a chaplain in a great family. Mr. Hoadley chose the latter, as affording most remuneration for the present, and the greatest hope of preferment for the future. When he had subjected himself to this bondage, and lived long enough in it not only for the iron to enter his soul, but to

become comparatively disqualified for any other mode of life, his mother, whose comfort had influenced him in his choice, died and left him alone in the world. He was neither a sot nor a confirmed gambler; he was a passive witness of his master's delinquencies, but not yet an active promoter of them. This was the most favourable account which could be given of him; all his higher aspirations, his purer hopes, had shrunk and withered, and were near to perishing, when he encountered Grand'mère.

“I say nothing of the glory of God and the usefulness to man of your choice, my pastor and son,” said Grand'mère, with her usual large and merciful allowances, “because you say you did it to provide for your mother; and is it not said that he who provideth not for his own house is worse than an infidel? But in the name of God what hinders you now from leaving that un-

happy Castle, and shaking the dust from off your feet against it?"

Grand'mère paused, but getting no reply she proceeded; "The pastors of the Huguenots quitted their fatherland and the scenes of their youth, they broke the dearest ties and wandered abroad to struggle for daily bread under a foreign sky; or they stayed and ministered in their own France, and were imprisoned, fined, led to the halter, or shot in the market-place. Ah! Monsieur, if it is great and noble in any man, assuredly it is the prerogative of the priest to be great in suffering, that he may help the people—to descend into the pit himself, if so be he may rescue one of them."

"But I am a poor, sneaking, despicable fellow," lamented Mr. Hoadley. "I am not like your stern and saintly Huguenot pastors, reared in the wilds to the rattle of the dragoonades I read of when a boy. Would to

God I were a boy again, madame, to begin life anew! But I have lain in the lap of luxury, and am as full of disgusts and aversions as Rolle, and as full of vapours and nerves as my lady. I'll lay you a bet my mind is going. I could not study an hour on a stretch for a pension. Certainly my health is broken; I had an attack of ague in the fall, and at intervals I shake and sweat by turns to this hour."

Grand'mère looked into the worn face, and some tears fell quietly from her old eyes.

"I dare not go up to London to rot in the Bench or the Marshalsea, or fill a cell in Bedlam. I am not free from scots as it is, and the Reedham gaol or a neighbouring ditch may serve my turn. I have made my bed, and I must lie upon it; but is there no hope here, dearest madame? Is there no atonement for such a caitiff as I am?"

Grand'mère clasped the young pastor's thin hands, kissed him on the forehead, and told him of hundreds and thousands of her persuasion in France whom De Missy, Bourdillon, above all Saurin, had reproached and condemned for not coming out of the country, proclaiming their creed, and casting in their lot with the exiles. But for herself—she did not know—she was a simple old woman, only she trusted that her God would not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. She had read of lifting up the hands which hang down, and strengthening the feeble knees. She thought if a situation were not morally wrong in itself, the wrong in it belonged chiefly, if not entirely, to the wrong-doer. Great loss might be suffered—greater in the main and in the end than any loss which could not be contemplated or consented to, in abandoning the situation; but she could never, never

think it would be perdition. Salvation might be as by fire to such as escaped from dangers like these, but she fully believed it would be salvation. Truly, there was work for a pastor in the Castle; and if he wrestled and resisted, he might do something to bear a good testimony, and to stem the tide of evil. But if he were dismissed? Ah! well, perhaps that would be the best thing that could happen him, and the Lord would be his provider. She counselled him to consult the pastor of Sedge Pond, and to be guided by him, his superior according to the government of his Church, notwithstanding that the young man shrank from Mr. Philip's searching scrutiny and severe reprimand. Finally, Mr. Hoadley and Grand'mère parted friends.

Thus it came about that Mr. Hoadley was constantly dropping into the Shottery Cottage, to be entertained with a little choco-

late and an unlimited amount of succory water. Being a very excitable man, quick at borrowing and throwing back the characters and tastes of the company that surrounded him, he came to discover that Grand'mère's child, who hardly looked at him, and was very scant in her kindness to him, was not only fair, but "good, and true, and wise," a genuine descendant of Grand'mère's, and fit to be coveted for her own sake, as well as for that of her venerable kinswoman.

Between Mr. Hoadley and the next visitor at the Shottery Cottage there was a great difference, both in the original constitution of the men and in their social position. The second visitor did not wear the coat of a gentleman, and he stood behind Lord Rolle at table, in place of sitting at the foot of it. But it was a grand coat

which he wore, and an important station which he occupied. Regarded as "his honour" at Sedge Pond, he was condescending to the farmers and small clergy in the vicinity. He was a man of more substance and consideration than the poor chaplain; and while Lord Rolle would address the latter as Parson Hoadley, or by any other idle, insolent name which came to hand, he never addressed his butler by any term more disrespectful than "my good fellow." Sometimes, in the height of urbanity and affectation, he would even preface a request with "my child." It was said that my lord deigned on occasions to borrow gold guineas from Mr. Lushington, and to accommodate himself with Mr. Lushington's name on paper. Perhaps Mr. Lushington was, on the whole, the most respectable institution at the Castle, for he was a man verging on sixty, and had served my lord's father.

Nay, he had been born in the Rolles' service, as his father had been before him; and in the midst of the wanton waste and pillage in high places, he did what he could to preserve the honour of the family, and to look after their interest before his own. He was a portly man, who set off his lace, the scarlet of his livery, and his silk stockings, and wore his cauliflower wig when he went abroad. A portly man and a pursy, with a round snub nose, somewhat copper-coloured, sharp twinkling eyes, fat cheeks, and a polished ball of a chin; a man bristling over with prejudices, and with choler if these were assailed. Little as they deserved it, he had an immense respect for his family; he called them his, as if he had the onerous task and the great misfortune to be their progenitor. To cover their misdemeanors and vindicate them from reproach and injury, he fumed,

stormed, and perspired at every pore; and he happened to have an intense hatred to scarecrows of Jesuitical, papistical French. He bounced right into the parlour at the Shottery Cottage, without heeding the “Tiens! Rabshakeh!” of Madame, and without waiting for the heavy march of Priscille, who stood in awe of him, if she stood in awe of anybody. It was not that Mr. Lushington had the most distant wish to recover “my lady’s trapesing prodigy; but then what right had she to scud off as if she had taken pisen, when her victuals had been as good as quality junketings?” He himself had filled her glass with such old Bordeaux as he would warrant she had never tasted in her fine France. Yes, she must be rated soundly, for it was not for the honour of the Castle to stand such doings. It made him mad to think of such notice being wasted on a slothful outlandish pack,

when there were families and families of honest Britons who would have worked hard to deserve it.

Yolande knew that Mr. Lushington was a great authority in the Castle, that he was a foe of another calibre from the chaplain, and that, perhaps, she had never seen so magnificent and autocratical a personage in her life as he who now stood there, all swelling in his purple and scarlet. Still, she took his rating bravely.

But though Yolande was brave enough to present a cold, stiff front to the enemy, she did not attempt to defend herself. She no more dreamt of warming, and melting, and making an appeal to the generosity, the fairness, or the humanity of her assailant, than of appealing to one of Lady Rolle's snorting coach-horses, or to a bellying bull in the park. It was Grand'mère who took rapid measure of Mr. Lushington's

massive proportions and made the attack; and she did it with manifest zest and enjoyment, becoming for the nonce more quaintly proverbial, more fluent, more graphic than ever.

“Ça, you will surely not speak to our backs, Maître Bonhomme, and we only three rags of women? You are a brave man. We also know what bravery is. We had our Schomburg, our Ruvigny, and you English heard of them too, and helped yourselves to their bravery at the Boyne and at Oudenarde. And we are all baked with the same flour, though we were from the side of St. Louis. Ah! there is still a quarter of your London which you call Petty France, and what would you do for water-gilding, clock-making, sign-painting, hair-dressing, and perfumery without its inhabitants? What would you do for silk-weaving without Spitalfields? We are not

lizards to bask in the sun (if we had the sun to bask in), as you say. We are good citizens, peaceful and diligent. We do not drink, nor do we swear; none of us waylay and stab, save Gardelle and Guiscard, who are the only two miserable criminals among us. You remember all these things at present, and you begin to respect us a little for our patience, our endurance, our ingenuity. All that is true, Maître Lushington, and you comprehend it because you are one of the English who could be as patient and enduring, though not as ingenious, in adversity. You cannot save yourself from a suspicion of esteem, even while you ‘humph! humph!’ and thrust your hands into your breeches pockets, while you look at our skips and our shrugs, or listen to our chatter.”

“Antic fiddlers, mountebanks!” growled his honour, with a shade of shame on his broad visage.

“Alas! I fear we vex you horribly,” continued Grand’mère. “Still, you harbour us, you serve yourselves with us, and, in spite of the national antipathy, you esteem those of us the more who have renounced our fatherland for what we call duty, freedom, and purity. What! we disobeyed our Louis, as you disobeyed your Charles and your James, only we were not fire-eaters; we have not gone above the houses like you. These hands must grow more like claws with emptiness, and redder with desperation, unbound by law or gospel, before they tear down the sacred majesty of kings. It is in the nature of the French, Romanist and Reformed, to be loyal as the lilies are white.”

“If you are so loyal, why did not the girl bide in her service?” interposed Mr. Lushington. “A fig for her loyalty, to break the bargain and run off like an ill-doer! The flagons and sconces, my lord’s and Mr.

George's nick-nacks, my lady's rings, are all to the fore"—so he did not mean to bring any accusation on that score.

"My little daughter entered the service of my lady,—good," said Grand'mère emphatically; "she quitted it again without the ceremony of asking leave to do so,—bad. Have you a daughter of your own, Maître Lushington?"

The butler shook his ambrosial curls and smiled grimly in the negative. "No, nor ever a dame, I'm thankful to say, mistress."

"Ah, well, I compassionate you," said Grand'mère, throwing in her gracious pity with a wave of her hand. "But you had a good mother once. Suppose she had entered the service of the old seigneur."

"She!" interrupted the butler in a towering passion. "She were a good mother, and that bean't a likely or a sightly supposing. Mother were as honest a woman as

ever stepped; she could not taste a cool tankard, let alone sack-whey or burnt brandy. She would not have known a card from a wagon-ticket. She could spell a chapter in the Bible, for she was a scholard, but she read nought besides except the tallies and the trades' tokens. My sisters, Cherry and Moll, were such likes. I can tell you, feyther's women had no trade with the Castle."

"And if they had once entered it by one great mistake and misfortune, say you, would you never have forgiven them if they had found their way out again as quickly as possible?"

"I have nought to say in answer to such a question," replied Mr. Lushington, shortly and surlily, after a pause, during which he had fingered a wart on his round chin as if he had meant to pluck it off by main force.

"Things are not consorts, as my brother the sailor, who licked the French under the

great Admiral Benbow, was wont to say."

"And found them difficult, very difficult, to lick, Maître Lushington," maintained Grand'mere, with imperturbable good humour. "You will admit that, for the sake of your brother."

"Wounds! you have me there, madam," granted Mr. Lushington, unable to resist making the admission.

"And are there not some things still that Maître Lushington would not give up to his masters—would count more precious than their favour, and which he would not wish to persecute and destroy poor strangers for seeking to spare?"


Mr. Lushington marched out of the Shottery Cottage without another word. He came back again, however, to tell Grand'mère, in his bluff fashion, that nobody from the Castle, with his consent, would trouble her or hers.

The first result of this interview was a messenger with his honour's respects and a bunch of English sweet herbs to the old French madam. And this was followed by the same messenger, bearing in succession the same respects, and a string of hog's puddings, a pitcher of clotted cream, and a basket of what were left of the winter's pippins.

Grand'mère met all the respects and the gifts with the most enthusiastic compliments to "the noble donor," her "very excellent and most honourable friend, Maître Lushington," from his "highly obliged and deeply-indebted serviteur, Gèneviève Dupuy."

CHAPTER IV.

The Man of the World and the Woman of the Closet.

ONSIEUR returned to Sedge Pond even more bland and polite than he had set out, expecting to surpass the hopes and desires of his women. He had brought a top-knot for Yolande; and had procured through a compatriot, not without trouble and expense, a real live orange-tree, grander than any of the Italian pines and Guernsey lilies of the famous Castle gardens, to lend the true French air to Grand'mère's *jardinière*. And he had shown a desire to suit the tastes of each, for he presented to Madame a memoir in which

the details of the watch of St. Barthélemi and of the galleys were set down with more ghastly precision than ever. To her such details lent a strong relish to life, keener than Grand'mère's fragrant orange-tree could lend.

And Monsieur, selfish as he was, did not cease to be mindful of the inclinations of his wife, though he received only groans and taunts in return for his little cares. He was by no means deficient in the courtesies and charities of life, but he was inscrutable at once in constitution and conduct, notwithstanding his having been set down as only a shabby, disreputable plotter in the mind of Lady Rolle. He sat in his cabinet and pored over commercial bills and weavers' figures, or he waited on for the mail, overwhelming Mr. Hoadley and Mr. Lushington with civility every time they crossed his path. Yet somehow the poor chaplain and

the substantial butler agreed on one point—they both entertained entire distrust of the sallow foreign gentleman.

Monsieur, in the intervals of his absorbing preoccupation, played the lover to Grand'mère (who brightened afresh as a French mother brightens at a French son's redeeming tenderness), treated his wife with *bourgeois* good-breeding and carelessness, and dealt to Yolande a modified version of the same, perhaps with a shade less deference and a shade more interest. Going out one day he chanced to encounter my lady's coach, and lifting his hat clean off his peruke, he first received in return a haughty stare, and then an imperious wave to the coach door, where he stood and conversed for ten minutes.

The effect of that ten minutes conversation was soon manifested. Monsieur returned to the Cottage, went up to Yolande,

pinched her cheek, and said to her lightly enough,

“What is this, my child? Art thou of years enough to make rules?”

He then announced to Grand'mère and Madame that his daughter was next day to go back to the Castle, to the gracious protection of my lady.

“Oh, father! for pity's sake,” pled Yolande, so agitated that her words were nearly inarticulate.

“The affair is settled,” he answered her, coolly. “Is not the first principle obedience to parents, my well-instructed *fille*?”

Now, unless in the utmost extremity, Grand'mère shrank from opposing her son. The worldly-minded, cynical, scheming man was so devoted to her, and so fond of her, and Grand'mère's sense of filial duty, like everybody else's to whom duty has any meaning, was immoderately high. Grand'-

mère thought that if she entreated her son he would yield his most fixed determination, his most cherished wish, and even forego his dearest advantage. But just because her influence over Monsieur was unbounded, Grand'mère was loath to exert it even on behalf of her darling. So she endured an agony of doubt while she hung back and let Madame oppose her husband's project. And Madame, who in the moroseness and recklessness of her fierce fanaticism was at last roused to the difference between Yolande's drinking tea and supping at the Rectory, and her dining and turning night into day and day into night at the Castle, at last spoke her mind :

“ My husband,” she said, following Monsieur to the threshold of his den, “ I must have a word with you. Some words are no more welcome than hail showers in May ; but the peach-trees have to bear the one,

and the men ought to bear the other."

"A bushel of stones and of words, my good Philippine," acquiesced Monsieur, leading his panting wife jauntily through the narrow lane made by chests and packing-boxes.

"Bah! words are easily said," protested the incorrigible woman, as she sat in the leather-covered chair. "It is good deeds which show that men are pious and pure, and not the deeds of a worldling, a traitor, my fine Monsieur."

"If one snivels let him blow his nose," reflected Monsieur, composedly, "but I do not snivel; and, pardon me, but I am astonished that a woman so wise and so diligent, and whom I have the felicity to name my wife, should break in upon business to tell me an incontestable truth; but out of place—without doubt out of place."

So Monsieur calmly assured Madame, as

he stood there with one hand in his breast, while with the long yellow fingers of the other he rapped on the table.

“You give up all for business,” said Madame hotly. “What hours are left you for meditation?”

“Perhaps I believe that my Philippine spends enough of time in that to serve both. Perhaps on Huguenot principles, my dear, I decline to render, even to my wife, an account of my soul, as to a father confessor.”

“Father of Yolande!”—Madame apostrophised him in strange dramatic form, not without power in its complete concentrated earnestness—“the castle of the English quality is full of men and women who are bold, corrupt, and wicked!”

“Mother of Yolande, I know all that,” answered Monsieur, emphatically; “but a woman of the *haute noblesse* has given me

her word of honour that not a hair of the child's head shall be injured, and not a spot shall come upon her reputation."

"I crack my fingers at her ladyship's head, and at her reputation. It is Yolande's faith in God, Monsieur, her immortal soul, that I care for."

But it would have been easier to remove a mountain than to shake Monsieur's philosophy by such blows as these.

"Yes," answered Monsieur, with polite acquiescence, "but her faith to be faith must be tested; her soul if immortal cannot be hurt by all the adverse forces in the world. You believe that, Madame? My mother believes it, and you believe, too, that the soul is in good keeping. *Fi, fi, donc!* what can the greatest reprobate of a father—and I assure you that there are fathers worse than I—do against the soul of a daughter? Do you ask me to

teach you the catechism at this time of day?"

"You can do nothing, nothing against the soul of the child save cast it into the fires of temptation. The good God be praised for that! But you will not do that, my husband?" wept Madame, with a persistency the more pathetic as it softened and waxed more womanly, but never wavered.

"To harden it? Perhaps yes. But I do not deceive you, Philippine, whatever you may think. I am very sorry to refuse you a true request, but I must do it. You oblige me to tell you that you are an enthusiast, a devotee, like the dear old woman. I acknowledge, I appreciate your good intentions, though you are unfortunate enough to have a sombre humour, my poor, unreasonable Philippine. But never mind. I understand it; it does not hurt me at all."

So Monsieur encouraged his wife, not unkindly, in the midst of his discipline and defiance.

“Not one of you knows a straw of the world in which you live, the actual world of fools, knaves, despots, and slaves,” he went on with the calm assurance of superiority. “You exaggerate horribly, and you teach Yolande to exaggerate. It matters not for you, but it may matter a great deal for her. For the rest, in Catholic families, even the most rigid, where one member has a vocation, that is held to be enough. Must all my women have vocations because we are Huguenots? The *grande dame* condescends to *fille*, and promises to make her fortune. In the meantime *fille* is fastidious, impertinent, and ungrateful to a marvel. Ah, well! *fille* must go back, beg my lady’s pardon, re-enter her service, and thank me that I say,

with the great Henry, 'Paris is worth more than a mass,' to the end of her life."

"And from beyond the tomb?" questioned Madame, fixedly.

"One cannot tell what she will say from beyond the tomb, my dear Madame," Monsieur urged, with the utmost affability.

"My husband, you are a sceptic, a Turk, a heathen!—you are no Huguenot, save as regards your miserable politics."

"I have the honour to salute you, my wife. If you say so, I shall not be so rude as to contradict you; besides, you ought to know best."

"What devil has you in his hold, that you should send a young girl, even though she were not yours, to destruction?" urged Madame, goaded to a kind of despair.

"I have never seen the destruction; and, for one thing, I have no wish to find *fille* promoted to dress St. Catherine's hair."

“Oh! the equivocation,” exclaimed Madame, scornfully; “there is something more than that.”

“There is something more than that,” granted Monsieur; “it is for my well-being and that of my countrymen, for my safety and yours, that I do what is possible, and that Yolandette accepts the *rôle* of Esther without ceremony. What will you do if on next fair-day the peasants cease shouting at the old women who grin through the horse-collars, and at the dancing bears, and commence to pelt the Shottery Cottage with big stones, and fire *en face*, as the English Jacquerie pelted and fired like demons during the Reedham elections?”

“Let them do so,” boasted Madame, proudly. “I have no fear. I give my body with the other bodies to be burned for the good of the souls.”

“Truly!” Monsieur submitted mildly;

“but though it would be the folly of the cross, against which as a mere mortal I say nothing, it would not be at all pleasant, my Philippine, to a mere mortal. Go! you are an ancient, and I a modern Huguenot, which are quite different things. For me, I think that the Huguenots have already been martyrs enough, for all the harvest they have reaped, or all the effect they have had on the world, to my knowledge.”

“Monsieur, I forbid my daughter to go to the Castle again!” said Madame, vehemently.

“Madame, I forbid my wife to forbid my child to do what I command. Art thou not my wife?” asked Monsieur, quietly.

“Alas! yes,” lamented Madame openly, as incapable of denying a true impeachment as she was of the smallest self-restraint and concealment. “But it is over my body that you will take Yolande from this house.”

“By no means. Your body is my property. I shall not let it lie where it will sustain the least damage; you may depend upon that, my excellent Philippine.”

Madame had done her little to defend her daughter—there was nothing for it now but that Grand’mère should enter the lists and beseech her son’s clemency.

“My son, the little one did not like the Castle,” whispered the old woman to the mature man hanging over her.

“The little one knows not what is good for her. You have spoilt her, my mother, as you spoilt your doubtful character of a son, before her.”

“Say you, then, that I have spoiled you, Hubert?”

“Yes, but by your supreme goodness, my mother.”

“The little one fears the great wild Castle, Hubert. If you could feel her

heart, you would discover that at the thought of the Castle it beats like the heart of one of my birds."

"What! a poltroon, not a heroine, descended from the mother and you, as well from myself! How trying! But we have all sprung from the side of Adam, and that, well understood, explains it all. The women love the beatings of the heart; one of your birds has said that to my cap. But your heart beats not; it has too much of the serenity of heaven, good mother. As for that of my Philippine, it beats not neither—not even like a drum or an alarm-clock—no, indeed! for it bounds and whizzes like a gigantic machine."

"Do you count it a great affair for you, my son, that the child of my age should leave me and my white hairs, to keep company with the dissolute quality of the godless world?"

“A great affair,” answered Monsieur, very gravely; “needs *ma mère* to ask that? It insures my success in a large venture; the Quality have as much in their power in trade as in other things. You know I am born *bourgeois* and tradesman, and I cannot quit trade till I quit life. The patronage of Lady Rolle for Yolande, and through Yolande for the family, for the weavers, the *émigrés*, keeps me in shelter, and gives me confidence—it makes the way easy for me.”

“My son,” said Grand’mere, softly and sadly, as she turned away her head, “will you let the way be difficult for my sake?”


“That suffices, mother, if you will it. Poor little mother, you know not—— But you will it. The darling of Grand’mère stays and marries the Methodist preaching squire, who certainly flings not his handkerchief to her, or the poor dinner-table priest,

or else she remains an old maid, to be robbed on all sides, and at last murdered in her bed for her nightcap and the bed-pan, who knows? Since I came to this England I have seen a servant burnt with faggots for the murder of her mistress; but Yolande is the child of Grand'mère, as I am the child of Grand'mère, and Grand'mère does what she wills with both her children."

Then Monsieur kissed Grand'mère's hand and left her, and when he was out of her sight he struck his forehead and gnawed his nails in bitter disappointment and sore vexation.

CHAPTER V.

Audrey Throckmorton.

PRING had come to Sedge Pond at last. But it was not the spring of biting winds, blinding dust, and stinging hail; it was the spring that is page and usher to the summer, and is so young, tender, and graceful, that the man in his strength who is to follow after is hardly thought of or desired. A spring unerringly acknowledged by all living and even by all inanimate things: by the ringdove and the lapwing, the humble-bee and the dragon-fly; in the woods now bursting into a flush of delicate green brushed with fruitful brown; on the

Waäste with yellow trails of golden gorse ; by the water with the white ranunculus budding among the still sere flags and rushes. Grand'mère was at once like ringdove and lapwing, like the hoariest old oak in the Castle Park and the stiffest old hound in the Castle kennel. She had a heart still green, which awoke throbbing obediently to God's signal in the gentle breath of his south wind, as it had done for fourscore years. All personal trouble, loss, and infirmity were put on one side as she smiled back to God's smile on the face of the earth, rejoicing like the angels that in spite of confusion, perplexity, sin, suffering, and death, all was indeed very good.

One morning in May, Grand'mère, by the help of Yolande and Madame Rougeole, had made the tour of her alley, her terrace, her fish-pond, and had reached her arbour. Although her voice was cracked she cried out

first, and most sweetly, at the sight of dusky violet and dainty jonquille.

It was here in the arbour that Lady Rolle had been so fain to sit with her old friend, to make the illusion of a French pastoral complete. To further this she would not have minded forcing Yolande into the character of Chloe, and Mr. Hoadley, or any other hired servant, into that of Corydon, so that she might the better trifle with the seasons, and make believe that March was May, even at the risk of consigning poor Grand'mère to the torments of rheumatism, or to a fatal quinsy or pleurisy. My lady would have the small gratification of beholding and forming one in such a group, even though it should fall to pieces in her hands and its members should perish in the fragments.

But now May was come, and Grand'mère thought of the great lady pensively, and with many excuses. Of what was frank as

the day in Lady Rolle, of her dauntlessness, her staunchness, and her kindness, Grand'mère was fully appreciative. Sitting framed in periwinkle and ivy, she was a picture of faith and meekness, at once balmy and beautiful. But she could not help hankering after the troubled spirit of the great lady, and owning to herself that the vindictive hatred which Yolande's abandonment of the Castle, and the Dupuy's rejection of all overtures from the Rolles, had called forth, would have power to wound her in spite of the deep experiences of her long pilgrimage. Still, Lady Rolle's sweeping accusations of heartlessness and insolence, her revilings and her blazing resentment, would cut Grand'mère to the very heart—that heart which age could neither benumb nor petrify. It was only in looking back at the past, with its tribulation ended and its mercy alone undying, that Grand'mère dwelt on the clear,

shining hills of Beulah, above the mists of distraction and the thunderbolts of suffering. So she sat and spent a sigh on the great lady, who was immeasurably farther from Madame de Sevigné than was Grand'mère herself, though Grand'mère did not see it.

Without prelude or preparation, without the roll of her chariot wheels, or the tramp of the horses' hoofs, the honeysuckle, periwinkle, and ivy seemed to part as by the wave of Merlin's wand, and my lady, in her superb train, and jewels, and shepherdess's hat, stood in the opening among the soft shadowy leaves, scorching Grand'mère herself a little, and causing Yolande to shrivel up in a corner in something like an ecstasy of dismay, for my lady's face was more than ever like an illuminated mask, behind which burned pride and passion. But, as if wholly to balk anticipation, Lady Rolle showed no sense of the discord

between her and the Dupuys, nor did she display any animosity even to the chief culprit, beyond shaking her finger at her, and crying out,

“Child, you’ve been prodigious naughty ; you’ve almost forced me to have words with my good old Madame. Mighty fine, indeed, when chicks like you are to take alarm, and fly off in a hurry-scurry, without even a note to the old bird whose cluck has offended their delicate ears. But go to roost, or where you will now, child, for I want to speak to Grand’mère’s sober ears alone.”

Yolande gladly tripped off to the house, while Lady Rolle sat down beside Grand’mère. She spread herself out on the seat, and put up her fan, but soon forgot it again, and let it drop in her lap in the heat of her conversation :

“Goody, I’ve come to tell you my story

—ladies of quality have told a vast deal worse ones in far more discreditable quarters before now. I wish to enlighten you as to my intentions, that you may no longer thwart me, and stand in a peevish baby's light."

My lady began at the very beginning.

"Ah!" she said, "dear Goody, I guess my early days were very different from yours, and I vow the chances and changes I have known would astonish you. I was motherless as a child in the house of my father, a wild-living, broken-down country justice. It was a coarse, rough, riotous life that was led in our house, and our notion of the whole duty of woman was that she should be able to work frills, to keep accounts by an effort of genius, to ride on Dobbin when allowed, and to dance cotillions when possible. One great point in my duty was to keep out of sight and sound

of those orgies which left my father so morose and maddened in humour, that he would not speak to me for months at a time, but would go about burning the books in his library, and smashing what furniture was still left him to break. When I was an ignorant and helpless, but not over-innocent child of fifteen—and I was never troubled with dulness or innocence—I was called from spelling out a dream-book, and playing with a litter of puppies in the alcove above the bee-hives in the garden, to the side of my father's chair, where, suffering from gout, he sat like a chained bear. I was to be presented to my future husband, Lord Rolle, who had won me, the best part of the prize, and the inheritance of my father's acres, at the hazard-table the previous night. Ah! dear Goody, that was scarcely the way to make a loving pair of us. To this day I confess to you I hate the

marriage and the bridegroom, not because my lord was old, and had the worst character, as well as the highest position in the county, not because he was a widower, whose usage of his first wife, according to rumour, had been shameful, but because he had a splay foot, a nose reddened with wine, and was altogether so bloated and ugly, that the children of Sedge Pond screamed when his muff and night-cap appeared at his coach-window."

Lady Rolle saw that Grand'mère shuddered at her plain speech, and stopped for a moment, expecting her to speak; but Grand'mère remaining silent, she went on to tell in detail of the wicked mockery of her wooing, and the barbarous persecution which she had had to undergo, and the frantic struggles she had made to free herself,—

"I can tell you I nearly destroyed my

fine plumes—certainly I soiled them—in my mad struggles to escape. Only bethink you of a mere chick of a girl going disguised as a farm-servant in a waggon to London, where she had not a friend, and where the chances were that, in place of good Samaritans, she would meet with thieves viler than those that plied their trade between Jerusalem and Jericho. But I could dare that and more, good Grand'mère. I was soon followed and brought back, however ; and I was so mad with disappointment and vexation that I stuffed my long hair into my throat to make away with myself, till my father had it clipped as bare as shears would clip it, and would not suffer me even to cover the deformity with a wig. And then, when I was so shamed by the fright they had made me, and by the cackles of the servants about me, that I would have given in

to marrying a man with a calf's head, or even the 'Cock Lane Ghost,' my dear old Archdeacon came, and would have saved me if I had been to be saved. The Archdeacon was my dead mother's uncle, who had lived all his life in the midst of his learning and preferment, in what she called the odour of sanctity. He had heard of my miserable plight, and travelled all the way from his retired, dignified residence in an episcopal town, to interfere in my behalf."

And here the sharp, domineering, high-set voice of Lady Rolle involuntarily softened, for the hardly-used girl, who had lived to have her revenge as a woman, always felt a tender pride when she thought of the good Archdeacon's having taken that journey.

"Ah," said Grand'mère, "there are priests and priests; he must have been a pearl

among the dust. You have had some men like that in England too."

"I never met such another as my dear Archdeacon," Lady Rolle went on, apparently not noticing Grand'mère's last remark; "he would have sacrificed half his living for me, I do believe. He pledged himself to Lord Rolle as security for the sums my father had lost at the gaming-table. He put the two arch-conspirators against me to shame by his manliness, his generosity, and his patience; and he carried away his poor prize in triumph, to dwell under the shelter of his honourable roof and his unblemished character."

With vivid power and clearness of recollection, Lady Rolle described to Grand'mère the peaceful life among the Church dignitaries, until she could see the noble cathedral aisles, handed down from other ages, and hear the solemn chanting and the

sweet singing of the evening hymn,—the women at their work-tables, and the men at their side reading aloud, and among them, like a branded sheep, the young girl with the bare clipped head.

“But it was not to be, Grand’mère,” Lady Rolle informed her listener, with a look of haunting remorse, which was very different from repentance; “I tired of being good in no time. I was not pretty behaved, either by nature or education; I believe badness was in my blood, and at last the seven devils so got possession of me, that I began to hate the quiet women and the sober men, and even the very scent of the lavender.”

“Oh!” said Grand’mère, unconsciously, as she sighed and looked, if possible, more pitifully at Lady Rolle.

“But yes, that is plain truth, I hate the very scent of lavender, for the Archdeacon

was very fond of lavender, like that in your window; and I vow a waft of it comes across me strangely to this day. He grew great beds of it under the bow-windows, and it was always associated in my mind with the dulness of the place, which I soon came to hate even more than I hated Lord Rolle and the evil odour of sin and violence. What did I do, quotha? I gave my worshipful father to know that I had grown a good girl in the good company I had kept, and was ready to do his bidding! And I let the Archdeacon learn what a thankful task it was to attempt the reformation of a sinner. So the old man, mazed, sick, and disappointed, bowed his head, which was as white as yours, Grand'mère; but he could not persist in interfering to prevent a dutiful daughter's obeying her father when she was so minded. And he did not reproach me, though he would not marry me to my

lord, and set his hand to the deed. A bishop of Lady Yarmouth's throning did me that service. Well-a-day, I had my fill of stir and noise, feasting and brawling, and was able to tell how much worse was a brutal tyrant of a husband than a tyrant of a father."

Whether or not Lord Rolle had beaten his first wife black and blue like a butcher, he had certainly dragged his second wife out of bed by the hair of her head, and had caused her to stand—her teeth chattering with cold, and her limbs ready to sink with weariness—from the dead of the night to the broad day by the fauteuil to which he had recourse when he could not coax or compel sleep, and all out of the sheerest wantonness. And he had grudged my lady her pocket-money, her clothes, and even her food, when his niggardly fit succeeded to his prodigal one.

Lord Rolle had insulted his wife equally by his infidelity and his jealousy.

“And yet, and yet”—my lady suddenly stopped in her vehement recital of unsurpassed wrongs to look Grand’mère in the face with her native sincerity, and to say regretfully—“it was not always heathendom in our house; we were not always tormenting each other like savages. My lord, laid down with the small-pox, was crying what would become of him, for his very servants would no longer put a cup of cold water into his hand, and I said, ‘I will, my lord;’ and I stayed with him night and day, and risked my life, and what I cared more for than it, Madame, you may believe it—my beauty, which all the fools raved about, and hundreds mobbed my chair to catch a glimpse of.”

“My lady, you did well—you did well in that,” said Grand’mère; “and surely that

trial and that tendance made a closer bond between you?"

"You shall hear," said Lady Rolle. "I was spared the small-pox, and my lord recovered, and begged my pardon on his bended knees the first time he could go down on them. He swore never to abuse me again, and he kept his word—till the illness was six months out of his head, and I had provoked him beyond measure. Yes, we had our chances, if we had been resolved to be good, and our blood had not been corrupt. Then Rolle was born, a cross and a plague from his birth—and my lord began to fret and pester me with care for his heir, which came ill off his hand, that had not been over-kind to his former children. Why, what now, Grand'mère? What ails you?" she interjected sharply, for Grand'mère had involuntarily held up her pure, tender hands. "You need not cry

out. It was in Paris that I picked up the charming plan your French madames followed—that of banishing their sprigs from their hotels to the cottages of peasant women who were fit to rear them, and who could spare time to look after them, divine Nature being their best mother—that was the jargon—and no more trouble with the brats was given to the mothers in the rank above being mothers, till the children were old enough to be amusing, if that ever happened, or till they wanted to be taught the manners of ladies and gentlemen. Our men sometimes professed to like the little ladies as well as their dogs; but I never heard of them caring for the little lords. And if they left that fancy to the women, we certainly did not take it up, as we did rock crystal vases and cream-ware tea-pots. I protest I found the French fashion the most natural in the world, and I did what I

could to bring it into vogue, and to get my lord to endure it."

"Ah! how the miserable French dames and you stripped yourselves of the crown of your womanhood," said Grand'mère, bearing open and pitying testimony to her opposite experience. Then she uttered a passionate apostrophe—"O Lord! Thou knowest that Thou loadedst me with mercies more than my tongue could tell, and addedst but a few numbered chastisements; but the blessings which made my tongue sing for joy when I was a young woman, and made me young again when I was grown old and my arms were waxing empty, were when I held my Hubert upon my knees, and when the women said to me as they said to Naomi of old, 'There is a daughter born to Gèneviève,' and I took Yolande and laid her in my arms and became a nurse to her."

"Yes, yes," nodded her ladyship in ac-

quiescence, "I said at the first my life had been mighty unlike yours, Grand'mère, but I have known solitude as well as you. When Lord Rolle was at last struck with his death-blow, he took me out of the world and shut me up with him in the Castle. And I can tell you his death was like a new life to me, for it was an unmistakable relief and restoration of liberty and personal safety."

According to herself, Lady Rolle had made the most of it, after the fashion of King Solomon. She too had reigned like a queen for a season, had said to herself, "Lo, I am come to great estate," and in her goodness of person, in her wit, rank, and wealth, had given her heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. She too had made her great works, builded her houses, got her servants, her men-singers and her women-singers, and was great and increased more than all that were before

her, and whatsoever her eyes desired she kept not from them, and withheld not her heart from any joy. With the same inevitable result, too, she had looked at last on all the works that her hands had wrought, and on the labour that she had laboured to do, and came now and told of it in the spring garden. And her hearer was an aged widow, who had been oppressed and afflicted, who had been brought up in the wilderness, and was to make her grave among strangers, and who was yet sunning herself in the light of God's bounty and faithfulness, and taking pleasure in the daisies, the lambs, and her child Yolande, and thinking pleasantly of the heaven where the river was a water of life, the leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations, and where there was a lamb like as it had been slain. And behold that other woman, forty years younger, who had dwelt among her

own people, with her very sons in their manhood dependent upon her power, and hardly yet past the zenith of her splendour, come out of her way to tell Grand'mère that "all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and that there was no profit under the sun."

And the particular vanity under which my lady was now writhing had its root in him who should have been the beginning of her strength and the excellency of her dignity, and of whom, in their mutual failure, she spoke with her face growing livid. She complained bitterly of the trifling character of her eldest son.

"He is so engrossed in his selfish enjoyments—in his horse, his betting, his gambling, and his pictures, that he has never had a thought to spare even for his brothers, not to speak of his mother," she said. "He has never had any consideration for me, though I have taken care that he has

not been able to afford to quarrel with me. But now he is proceeding to crown all his evil doings, and is laying himself out maliciously and with deep design to humble me; and you know, Grand'mère, it is hard to be humbled by one's own son. But you have been happier; you don't know what that is, my good old soul."

"It is dark in some corners though the sun shines," said Grand'mère, "but it is a heavy burden to the mother's heart to be shut out from the son's."

"And the worst of it is," Lady Rolle went on, intent on her own grievances, "Rolle will never marry, he is too much of a *petit-maître*, a man about town; he could not suffer the restraint, the clog it would be upon his actions. Though he is selfish, and idle, and sneering, he can enjoy good fellowship, and is welcome wherever he goes. So you see, good mother, it is the more neces-

sary that George should marry. He would have done it ere now, dangler and shuffler though he be, if I had not stood in the way. You must know that he went and took a fancy to one of the Leicestershire Lowndeses, and would have been off and married her all in a breath, had I not stopped all that very quickly."

"And do you not believe it is well for the young folks to marry?" asked Grand'mère, with all her simple earnestness.

"Ah! yes, surely," said my lady, "but we have learned, among other things from France, that the parents should have some say in that matter. I have an old score against these Lowndeses, and that's not the way I wish to clear it off. The mother of Gatty Lowndes once slandered and injured me, and my son shall not marry Gatty Lowndes, even though she was fairer than I was, a greater fortune, and in every other

respect a vast deal too good for him. I tell you I would sooner give him over to the bailiffs ; for I might do the minx an injury if she were so silly as to come within my reach. Rolle knew my mind about that too, and yet he had the face to go and be a party to it secretly, in order to punish and affront his own mother. And they have laid a deep scheme. The Lowndeses are at Tunbridge, and Rolle has taken rooms for himself on the Parade there, and he wishes George to join him, though in general the one suits the other very much as my cat Fatima suits the dog Fluff. But I smelt the rat, and I shall yet get the better of both the wretches ; I shall see them undone at any sacrifice, even if I have to marry George to a ballet-dancer or the daughter of a chimney-sweep."

"Ah ! but surely they will listen to their mother's word at the last, to save

her from pain," said Grand'mère, in a hopeful tone.

"They will listen when they are outwitted and befooled," said Lady Rolle; "but you must aid me in this, Grand'mère, and lend me Miss Pendry; it would be no loss to you to oblige me in this business. George often noticed little Dupuy, and in his own lazy way spoke of her approvingly. He was greatly tickled by her running away, and even wished that he might catch her and tame her. But if Yolande were carried to the Wells—as I would do with your consent—a truce to your thanks—and brought into contact with George in private, and at the rooms, in such a way as would not be the least ungentle to the girl, George, who is so vain that anybody could flatter his vanity to the top of his bent, might be fooled into the rash and reckless step of marrying an obscure girl, if she

played her cards well. And I myself would teach the chit how to do this; while all the time George would judge, as he had every reason, that his mother would be furious at the *mésalliance*. And I confess to you, Grand'mère, I have always lived in dread of such a marriage by means of a curtain ring, and Hoadley or some hedge priest. The marriage once over, however, Rolle would be got the better of; Gatty Lowndes would be thrown out, and Yolande Dupuy would be young Mistress Rolle—Lady Rolle, in her turn; and not even her present ladyship's self, however much she might regret her desperate quits, would be able to tamper with them."

"Madam!"—gasped Grand'mère, flushing with the scant blood of fourscore, and hot and trembling even in the fresh spring day among her flowers and leaves—"is thy servant a dog, that she should do such a thing?"

“But, my dear old woman, you are clean mistaken,” argued Lady Rolle, mystified, with all her quick wit, at the quiver of indignation with which her condescension was received, and not refraining from stamping her foot at such an unexpected obstacle to her mad will. “The child, as one of us, would be completely sheltered from blame and exposure. The fact is, madam, when we cannot get rid of her, we must make the best of her. I daresay I should be forced to do as much in the end by Gatty Lowndes, supposing I could not shake her off, and if I did not pinch her black and blue, or push her downstairs on our first introduction,—and I am only a woman—and Rolle himself is one of the first gentlemen in England, and a nobleman. You forget—sure, you forget, Grand’mère.”

“I forget not—I shall never forget, to my shame and sorrow. What enormity

have I committed that a woman such as you should ask me to betray the child of the saints and martyrs of the galleys? The Bourbons are good nobility, but there are better—my own dear little one, so obedient, loving, and confiding!” cried Grand’-mère, tried even beyond her patience, and weeping, and wringing her hands, and shaking as if she had seen a spectre, because she had been taken unawares in the credulity of her faith.

Lady Rolle stared, gathered up her train, and said—

“I make you a thousand apologies. I thought that I had heard of such things as *mariages de convenance*, and all that; I must have been wrong advised, but, as I said before, I fancied the good fashion, like the getting rid of the bantlings, came from France.”


“Whatever you may have heard, ma-

dame," protested Grand'mère, in sad and solemn earnest—"whatever wrong *mariages de convenance* may have to answer for, no honest, righteous man or woman in France, or out of it, has ever employed the parental authority and the right of choice to accomplish a villainous barter and fraud."

Lady Rolle stared once more with flaming eyes, and flounced with stately step out of the arbour. She never sought Grand'mère, and never spoke to her again; only once more in all their lives did she address her, and that was in two written lines.

CHAPTER VI.

The Sedge Pond Sore Throat—The White Crusade.

HUS there was a reprieve to Yolande from the craft and force of the offended Quality. The Rolles quitted the Castle for Tunbridge in coaches and six, chariots, and waggons, exporting, as they had imported, the surfeit of self-indulgence, the icy glitter of worldly wit, and the furious contentions of unbridled wills. Mr. Hoadley alone remained behind, like a crow in the mist, to pursue some researches in the Castle library for my lord, who was not disinclined to have a reputation for scholarship acquired at second-hand. The

chaplain cheered his solitude by cultivating the friendship of the good women of the Shottery Cottage, until Madame herself thawed a little towards the young man, who listened so respectfully to her diatribes. Yolande, in her girlish severity, ceased to despise the weak young chaplain, whose weakness was no longer apparent in his fretful murmurs against his patrons and his slavish submission to them.

Dolly and Milly Rolle felt it a dreadful change to be thrown back on their old, idle home-life at the Rectory, Lady Rolle not having invited either of them, as they had fondly hoped, to pass the season with her at the Wells and in town. And though luckily no little bird whispered to their caps the proposal which had so enraged Grand'mère, the great lady, while she could not offend, had grievously disappointed them.

In their extreme *ennui*, the Rectory girls were so ill-off for social intercourse, that they set about taking up Yolande and the old Madame at the Shottery Cottage again. They were the more led to this perhaps that Mr. Hoadley had taken them up, though he hardly ever came to the Rectory, and then only to sit with their papa in his study, and to go back like a whining school-boy to his tasks. Then their papa would come into the parlour, and say to Madam, their mother, in their hearing,

“My life, what a contrast there is between this foolish young jackanapes and our manly Philip! Was that one of the reasons of the boy’s going so soon? Was he early ripe, and needed no growing old?”

And Madam would wipe her eyes, and answer meekly,

“His Father knows best.”

But, whining schoolboy and foolish jacka-

napes though he was, Mr. Hoadley's face was worth seeing, when all the fine folk were gone, and there was no other face to see. Mr. Hoadley was always least lackadaisical, and most sensible and spirited, when beside Grand'mère, though Grand'mère's presence involved that of Yolande, to whom the crackbrained fellow affected to pay a sort of moon-struck, distant court, because he wanted a subject for his poor verses. The girls could see that with half an eye ; and little Dupuy (the Rectory girls had borrowed the term, along with many a worse trick, from the Castle) was a simpleton and a hypocrite to permit it.

In one respect Yolande would not allow herself to be taken up by Dolly and Milly again ; but as Grand'mère said,

“ What will you? While we are in the world we must have neighbours, and we must love our neighbours and be at peace with

them, and make the best of them, covering over their faults, condoning their offences, and accepting their advances when they choose to make them,—that is, in so far as integrity and self-respect permit, for we may not attempt the destructive impossibility of paying equal regard to truth and falsehood, and loving with the same tepid, indiscriminating love, friends real and counterfeit, indifferent strangers and actual foes. But they and we must struggle to live together in the faint reflection of the divine benevolence.”

No one was so quick to recognise this truth as Grand'mère. She therefore received and welcomed back the pastor's daughters, though she was not blind to their fickleness, and did not think the ignorant, conceited, flippant girls improved by their temporary association with the Rolle family. Where would be the chance

of the improvement of such as they, if the old, the wise, the better-gifted and taught, all took the pet at them, and cast off the poor, crawling, fluttering butterflies on the least provocation, and did not see and acknowledge in them, as in every other human being, the glorious promise of infinitely better and nobler things,—a transformation such as the grub to the butterfly is but poor in comparison with?

The summer was hot, and from the slow river and the water standing in more than one slimy pond on the borders of the Waäste, a yellow mist rose and hovered over the village. Grand'mère remarked it, and pointed it out gravely to Yolande.

“It is the incense of the devil, which ascends as from the sulphur and brimstone wrecks of whole burnt-offerings of sloth and sin. Watch and pray, my little one, that it may be changed into the sweet savour of

God, which comes from heroic souls going down into the depths to save their brethren."

The Rector had seen it before, and knew it too well. He therefore made preparations for it by arranging to send away his womenkind to cousins of his on the east coast; on learning which arrangement Dolly and Milly literally jumped for joy. Of what good were his timid, formal Madam, and his silly lasses in a calamity? They could only hang upon him and harass him.

Old Caleb Gage, too, had the sign pointed out to him by his friend the doctor in Reedham, and had his orphanage and his infirmary set in order. He added to his prayers every night an extra petition—that men might learn wisdom from chastisement, and that labourers might be sent for that harvest which grows white in a day—that harvest of life-in-death which is unspeak-

ably precious and unspeakably awful in its supernatural growth and perfection. All the while the old Squire talked more to young Caleb than he had ever done before, of the first Caleb Gage, who had driven the earliest plough into the wide Waäste, which then extended from Sedge Pond to Reedham, and how men had the wilderness earth given them to make it into a great garden of Eden. Young Caleb, he urged, should do this part of the great commission; but he would at once set about raising money by mortgage for the work. He took shame to himself that he had always postponed the draining, trenching, quarrying, and building operations on the estate till the time when his son should take possession of it. But, God helping him, by the next fall the bringing in of the land should be begun.

Now that the English summer was in its

prime, and so far admitted indulgence in southern habits, Grand'mère loved best to take her meals in the open air. The rude villagers, spying through the garden-gate, or over the wall, where the branches of a spreading mulberry-tree screened them from the party within, could see a table set in the cottage porch, or in the arbour where cream-coloured roses, in clusters drooping with their own weight, had taken the place of the cold, blue-grey, scentless periwinkles. There were bronzed, shining beetles and earwigs in the roses, but Grand'mère could never dis sever these insects from the rest of God's creatures, and so she only brushed them softly away, while Dolly and Milly screeched at the sight of them, and stamped the lives out of them with their high-heeled shoes. When it was anybody's *fête*—and Grand'mère held that everybody must have a *fête*, and that

they and their friends were bound to celebrate it—Mr. Hoadley would have his flageolet, on which he could play fairly, and the girls would sing by turns with their simple skill, and Grand'mère would be as gay as a girl of twenty. When it was Grand'mère's own *fête*, Monsieur joined for once in the gaiety, and uncorked the Médoc; and Madame, sombre under centuries of party spirit and sectarian wrong, fried the chickens and *saupoudrait* the strawberries, and looked on without a particle of offence at the little Mother's happiness; while big Prie waited stumpingly, in a wonderful neckerchief and hood, in token that she was in the open air, and was a British islander.

But one day in June the weather was so oppressive, that Grand'mère and her children were forced to abide languidly in the darkest corners of the parlour, though the

villagers of Sedge Pond, condemned to work for their daily bread, were out making hay in the meadows by the river, as they had been all the week. She had lamented the obligation of the haymaking twenty times that day, and, taking the exposure of the people to heart, had been heavy over it in a way not customary with her. Yolande was almost thankful that Grand'mère must have forgotten the poor labourers, when the old woman broke a pause by exclaiming abruptly,

“Oh, that we had the thunder, though the peals split the stones, and the showers, though it rained horned cattle.”

“La! how can you wish such horrid things?” protested Dolly Rolle; “Milly and me are main frightened at thunder; we should go into fits at the first crack.”

“Oh, jioja!” Grand'mère put her off a little impatiently, “I should engage to

bring you out of them again. I should bear all your maladies on the thumb—at least, I hope so, my dears. If we had the thunder and the showers, they might not be too late to cool and wash the reeking, engrained earth.”

“Why, madam, where’s the reek and the engrainedness?” demanded the Rolles, pouting; “we never thought to hear you call the place such shocking bad names as it puts us in a twitter to hear. The village smells, as it does in summer mostly, but what of that?”

“Pho ! pho ! my good lady, your imagination or your nerves are running away with you,” even Mr. Hoadley remonstrated. “Haven’t you felt heat before, and what it breeds in a sluttish village? I own I am too much of a slave to my nose, but I could not quite reconcile myself to wishing for a thunder-storm, not even though we have

to thank the great Mr. Pope for one incident in a storm which is very pretty," he ended, with a profound sigh, wasted like his allusion, which nobody present comprehended.

"I'll tell you what is worse than the heat or even than the thunder," announced Milly Rolle, sapiently; "it is these poor folks sending for our papa every time they are taken with their infectious disorders, as if there was no chance of his being taken with them, and every other body at the Rectory, and no end to the pother. I declare I think it is monstrous silly and unkind in them, after all our papa has done for them, and the doles which we dispense at Christmas and at Easter, though they are common villagers and do not know how to behave genteel to us. What do you say, Mr. Hoadley?—would you read prayers to them?"

“I would if I were asked, miss,” answered the young man, colouring and hesitating for a moment, but speaking at last with decision, and in forgetfulness of the great Mr. Pope and his moving incident.

“To the hangman with being asked!” cried Grand’mère, excitedly; “who suffers in the village? What is the malady?”

“How should we know?” Dolly and Milly Rolle thus excused themselves in a breath from any further acquaintance with disagreeable facts. “We’d have the dumps in no time if we took up our heads with whoever was laid down. Besides, we’re to set out this day se’en-night; we are up to our eyes in business, and have only come out for an airing. Yes, indeed, Grand’mère, you may believe us or not, but we’ve to spur on Patty Brierley to finish our tam-boured gowns in time. We’ve to keep our mother in mind of all the clothes we must

take with us, and we've to ride with Black Jasper to Reedham for what the packman forgot at his last call. It was only by chance that we learned that there had been as good as three or four messages for our papa to attend sick-beds yesterday, and Doll was on the steps just before we came out, and heard another delivered about Mother Pott, who had been brought in from the hay-cocks with her throat as bad and her head as light as the rest."

"Ah!" said Grand'mère, "the thief discovers himself, and he is an old enemy;" and she named an epidemic which was then called putrid fever, that broke out in England towards the close of the last century, and mowed down whole families of the nobility as well as of their vilely-housed farm-labourers. "We must do what we can to arrest the terrible thief. I have met him before, and struggled to take his booty

from him—alas! not always with success. Now who is with me to cry ‘stop thief,’ and do what the good God wills to snatch from the villain the living prey which, ah! the *misère*, is delivered gagged and bound into his greedy clutches?”

At that moment the dismal sound of the passing bell stole out with a sullen clangor on the thick and loaded air. The Rolles fell back with their fingers in their ears, but before the first dull vibration had ceased, “I’m with you, Grand’mère,” said Yolande, with a swelling breast and shining eyes.

“Oh! dear, what has come to you Dupuys?” complained the Rolles, in shrill discomfiture and exasperation. “You don’t mean to tell us that you are so crazy as to wait upon the poor bodies that are sick? A fig for them, if that is to be the way of it, for we can’t come here again for

any more confabs if you go near stricken persons, we promise you that; and little Dupuy, who gives herself the airs of a princess or a nun, will never make so bold, and be so free. We were told the people themselves shut the doors in each other's faces, and won't lend a hand to nurse the living or bury the dead. And you are not clergy—no, nor even doctors.”

“Pardon,” said Grand'mère, rising to the occasion, and speaking quite cheerily, “every woman finds herself a little of the one and a little of the other so soon as she is tried, or she is no true woman and hand-maid of the Great Physician and Heavenly Priest. Besides, we have had the gift of the knowledge of herbs in our family since Bernarde Romilly staunched the wounds of the Condé. Have I never told you that? If the rest of the village shut the door, the better reason that I, an old woman, should

open and enter where fear and pain are all the company. *De grâce*, they will not keep me out now."

"Madame," said Mr. Hoadley, in great excitement, "I have not spoken, but I trust that you do not doubt I am your servant, to go on whatever errand you like to send me among the poor. If it become your gown, all the more must it become my cloth. I cry Heaven's mercy and yours that I have not seen it so before, and I am thankful that my patrons are not here to forbid me doing my duty when my eyes are opened. But, my dear old Madame, you are not so reckless as to run so frightful a risk as permit another and altogether unsuitable attendant,—though the Bible has records of ministering angels," ended the chaplain, hurriedly, with a significant glance at Yolande, who accepted the implication and repudiated the objection with the cool-

est indifference, if not the liveliest indignation.

“Monsieur, Grand’mère and I never part. If there is a task which she, old and feeble as she is, can undertake, why should I, who am young and strong, not be capable of it? If the question is one of worthiness and unworthiness, I comprehend Monsieur; but if not, I do not comprehend at all. But, young girl as I am, Mr. Hoadley, Grand’mère thinks me neither too bad nor too foolish to work with her in nursing the sick and serving God, who will pardon my unworthiness, and teach and help my weakness and folly.”

Poor Mr. Hoadley was confounded.

But Grand’mère was not so hard upon Mr. Hoadley and his motives; her days of girlish severity and sauciness had long been past, yet she, too, was against him.

“My friend, you do not know the

French. Vincent de Paul introduced another fashion among us an age ago. There are girls by hundreds no older than Yolande among the Sisters of Charity and the Sisters of Mercy. The peasants began to shame the nobles. We are only *bourgeoisie*, but the nobles shamed the peasants and us by forming the *béguines* of Bruxelles; and there is many a noble girl in Vincent de Paul's blessed family at this hour. Assuredly, though we are Huguenots, and sing each year on the anniversary of the Revocation, 'By Babel's streams we sat and wept,' yet we are not lost to charity, and we fear not for our daughters, though their vows are silent and secret, and known only to themselves and their God. Go! there is nothing to fear. Can we best keep off the wolf by flying from him, or by going to meet him, hatchet in hand? As for the contagion and the infection, I know

them not, save as being still the finger and the breath of the living God that only reach as He wills. No journeys, no closed doors and bolted windows, will chase them away any more than they will chase away death. Truly, we want swift feet and iron barriers to escape from the King of Terrors, my son ; and I have never heard that he strikes the sister, the doctor, or the priest more than another. When he does," added Grand'mère, quailing a little, not for herself, but as she felt the contact of Yolande's warm young hand with her own chill and withered one, "some men and women ought to be the bravest of the brave ; some soldiers ought to lead the van, and God be praised the French women are brave. Have you not heard of our heroic *cantinières* ? Nevertheless, I shall not take my young recruit into the battle without her father's and mother's consent."

Madame came forward on the spot. She did not know what the bruit was about, or why Grand'mère should act the good *marquise* or *baronne* to the strange country people. But without doubt, if she chose to do so, Yolande should help her. She should die with vexation and shame at the idea of sparing a child of hers when the old mother made the venture. As to danger and to death, they were old comrades of the Huguenots, who knew what heavenly treasures and indestructible jewels to snatch from them.

“Thou good Philippine!” exclaimed Grand'mère, with enthusiasm. “She has hands like that! our Philippine. She can make a salad; she can make a *cataplasme*! We are *bêtes* beside her when she throws her soul into the oil-cruet, the camomile bouquet.”

But no; Madame's Christian charity was

only for Grand'mère and the Huguenots : it began and ended with them, and by no means extended to perfidious strangers, English and Lutheran. All the worse for Madame, since from this time when she sent off Grand'mère and Yolande on their universal mission, and refused to have part or lot in the matter, the sternness and narrowness of her galled spirit fettered and cramped her tenfold.

“Hey-day!” Dolly and Milly had been forced to utter, in final protest; “you’re all mad together at the Shottery Cottage this afternoon,—as mad as the Methodies and the Bedlamites. And since Parson Hoadley is smitten, we cannot be too glad that we’re a-going, lest we should be the next; though we were never used to vagaries, nor brought up to them.”

And thus Grand'mère at last found an entrance to the people, and Madame Rouge-

ole once more tapped her way, and rested confidingly by sick-beds. Mother Pott was the first whom she visited. She found the door shut and the window stuffed with rags. In the stifling darkness the woman's children, already ranged in a ragged row, were wailing like mourners hired for a wake. They had a dim notion of comforting and paying respect to their poor mother, who had toiled for them like a beast of burden, and borne them on her rough but sound and gallant heart, even when she "melled" them and "flyted" over them. Deb was clanking about in her haymaker's hat and clogs, the last put on for the house-floor, as "t'were aye weet a bit, unless the weather were main dry for a long spell;" and telling the little ones in solemn seriousness, and with a rude pathos, to sob away, and not bide to seek t'supper, for a craving stomach were one thing and an orphant hap another.

Sure they 'ud get more suppers if they tramped and begged for them; but no ^{*}tramping, and no begging, and no working would get them more mothers. A middle-aged, weak-minded neighbour, as uncouth as Deborah, was holding down Mother Pott's gaunt arms, which were instinctively struggling to tear off the old clothes heaped upon her, and to raise her tossing head and swollen purple face, that she might not be suffocated in the first stage of her disease.

“Dont'ee, now, dont'ee,” the neighbour was enjoining plainly, “or a'll have to slap and punch 'ee. There's nought but the sweat for 'ee. What ud 'ee hold up t'heed like a hen going to drink for? Heed mun be happed, t'must, lass. Nobut t'hour's come, Mother Pott, and ee'll gang, but a'd have 'ee to gang peaceably, and not like an ill-doer. Ee's been nash all thy life, 'ooman; 'ee might take a telling in the end, and show

'ee can behave sen afore the childer i' t' deed-thraw."

Deb made such an outcry when she saw Grand'mère, with Yolande at her back, that even the sick woman's ears, filled by the wild music of delirium, were pierced by the sound, and she desisted from her frantic movements for a moment, and turned her glaring eyes towards the door.

Had it not been that Mr. Hoadley followed Grand'mère and Yolande, and that Deb recognised him, and bobbed her curtsy to him as being one of the gentlefolks of the Castle, she would have tried with all her might—and she had the making of an Amazon in her—to drive out Grand'mère by force. As it was, she stood before the bed, and threw up her lank girlish arms in a desperate appeal.

"Mother, mother, it's the French quean, with her plots and cantrips. She be come

for me as soon as you're laid down. Her's a witch, mother, and her's laid 'ee down, m'appen, 'cause, if 'ee called me a burdock, and drubbed me, 'ee kept a roof aboon my heed and a bite in my mouth, and brought me up honest."

Deborah Pott had reason to remember that speech long afterwards.

Mother Pott's nurse, Sukey Frew, on hearing this, fled, with her teeth chattering in her head, from the contamination of foreigners and witchcraft combined.

But Mother Pott herself was unable to comprehend the situation, or to do more than raise her head with a jerk, and gabble hoarsely of Deb's being "a burdock and a tomboy, but feether's child, and a ud do a's dooty by her, though t' little ones ud clem for it."

"Wench!"—Mr. Hoadley would have put aside Deb indignantly—"do you not

know your betters, when Madame, heaven preserve her! has done you the grace to come here at the risk of her life?"

But Grand'mère interrupted him, beseeching, apologising, and explaining, as though it had been her who received the grace.

"My poor girl, will you not permit me to aid you? I ask your pardon that I intrude; I would never have done it, but for the extremity. Look you, I can go and leave you to suffer—*misericorde*, how you suffer!—if you will, which is your right. I will torment you no more by my strange looks and ways, unless you say, 'Stay, my old Madame,' when once I have relieved the sick. But yes, I can ease if I cannot cure, and I may save others. I pray you, Deborah, allow me at least, before I go, to open the window and door, and give the sick a breath of air. It is God's air, my

child, which he made for us all, for high and low, and for all the beasts of the field, great and small, that you know and love. I am sure of that. Then why have you such fear of the good air—the sweet air? The beasts of the field, do they fear it? No, they are wiser—taught by God their Father alone—they drink it in, they rejoice in it.”

Poor Deb stared, listened, and gave up all active opposition, looking like one spell-bound and fascinated.

“Yes, since Monsieur has held open the door and Yolande unfastened the window,” continued Grand’mère, striking when the iron was hot, “the poor woman breathes more softly—rests tranquil by comparison. Have pity upon her; she had pity on you even in seeking to save you from us, whom she knew not—whom she mistook. But judge for yourself, Deborah; you are not a

little child—you are a big girl ; have we not returned good for evil ? No, we do not hurt anyone if we can help it ; we only heal, if we can, as you would do in your turn, my girl. Is it not so ? Monsieur the Pastor is with us ; he believes us, and that would reassure mother if she could hear and see. We will find a pillow for her, and prop up her head. Make one of thine arm, meantime, my child, until we can find another. The arm is not full fleshed, but it is firm, and round, and soft as the down compared with the wooden block ; the unworn young arm is a good rest for the worn old head. Now, we will try if she can swallow this balsam ; she was in the hay-field so recently as this sun-rise, poor diligent one, and, God willing, she may hear and see again.”

But Mother Pott never heard and saw clearly in this world again ; never under-

stood distinctly, or knew anything further than that her mortal anguish was alleviated, in the degree in which wisdom and mercy could alleviate it. By a twist of the mind which was not without its moral beauty, she attributed all the poor solaces so unexpected and unfamiliar to her, to her step-daughter, and regarded them as the recompense, not only of her just dealing towards the girl, but of the rating which she had administered to her heavy handful.

“A’s made a woman of ee, Deb,” was her last broken murmur; “and now, sin’ ee can make a syllabus like the mistress at the hale-’ouse, and read like pearson, ye’ll hang on a’s hands no longer; ee’s be no more a burdock, lass, but a new ha’penny, stamped to be changed. A’s miss you, Deb, a and the childer.”

Five orphans were transmitted at once to the Mall orphanage; but Grand’mère


took the stunned and sorrow-laden Deborah home to Priscille, and braved and conquered the righteous wrath of that sovereign in her own domain at the unsightly importation. .

“ Old Madam,” began Priscille, “ I’ve served you and the family this score of years, the same as if I were all straight, and you had not been furrin. I’ve nought to say against the furrin ways ; leastways, I’ve put up with them ; but to have a young hussy and slut brought under my nose, and into my very kitchen, that I can’t and won’t abide.”

“ Prie, Prie, the Lord Jesus Christ had not where to lay his head once in his life, and as this poor child is like Him in that respect, know you not that when you take her in you take Him ? He said it Himself. Oh ! the privilege, the blessing to Shottery Cottage, to me, and to you, big Prie ! ”

CHAPTER VII.

Grand'mère and Yolande gain Allies in the Crusade, which turns out to be for the Deliverance of Souls as well as Bodies.

R. HOADLEY, having once joined the crusade to please Grand'mère and Yolande, remained on his own account, finding it such a school of humanity and divinity as he had never dreamt of in his University course, or in his chaplain's service at the Castle. The poetaster now got his first experience of nature in the rough, and the amateur priest first saw and sympathised with the real woes and wants of the poor. These woes and wants suggested the existence of a gulf which startled and

appalled the young man, and almost drove him out of the field with despair at the thought of how long he had been a consenting party to them by his selfish obliviousness and sloth. He blamed himself for never having lifted up a finger to protest against them or to lighten them, while all the time he was crying out and bemoaning himself for his patrons' tyranny, corruption, and worldliness.

While the Quality at the Wells or in town were attitudinising, swearing, squabbling, drinking, and gambling their lives away, such villages as Sedge Pond were wallowing in the dregs of the Quality's vices, and committing brutalities which would have shamed the heathen. The difference between the practices of the two classes was as Bartholomew Fair to Ranelagh. With the one there were matches at single-stick, wrestling, and boxing, with goug-

ing out of eyes into the bargain ; with the other, there were studies of dress and cookery, exchanges of pistol-shots and sword-play.

Sedge Pond was rural, but it was the reverse of innocent ; its rurality indeed only seemed to add grossness to its guilt. When, therefore, the summer scourge was laid on the inhabitants, pricked to the heart by remorse and dread of the hell of which they had the foretaste within them, they took to frenzied confession and abject submission. Mr. Hoadley was tempted to think that the catalogue of their misdeeds went near to exhausting the Newgate Calendar. It almost turned him sick with disgust and aversion to hear a hoary sinner proclaiming that in his youth he had committed highway robbery for which another man had swung in chains, and that he had gone and looked on at the execution. There were

sons who had struck mothers in their blind fury ; fathers who had turned out daughters into the darkness of night. There were brothers who had not exchanged friendly words for scores of years, but had lived railing at and reviling each other ; while there were sisters who combined to plunder fathers and mothers on their death-beds, and to defraud nephews and nieces while their natural protectors were laid in their coffins. There were men who had not slept sober in other men's remembrance, and women who went to the alehouse tap as regularly as the horses went to the watering trough. A wild, dissolute set of country people, of whom the purer-living were narrow and griping as a vice and hard as a stone. The Rector had done his best for them. He had shown them the life of a God-fearing, righteous, stern man, so that instead of mocking and scoffing at it, they respected and shrunk away from

it. He had rescued and trained the most of those who stood upright, but there was a link wanting between him and the reprobates; and this want lay, not so much in the present, perhaps, as in the past; but it was in the past that the grooves had been fitted in, on which the wheels of the pastor's and people's lives ran, and from which it was hard to dislodge them.

These were the men and women among whom Grand'mère and Yolande went day after day, not only without fear, but without loathing. To the pure all things are pure, and these evangelists and ministrants bore about with them charmed natures as well as charmed lives.

“How can you do it, Madame?” cried Mr. Hoadley, aghast at the inhumanity, brutishness, and villainy which he found had been festering and smouldering beneath his steps—“how can you do it, Madame?” he

cried, as Grand'mère moistened the lips of a man whose wife had fled out of ear-shot of his blasphemies, while Yolande bathed the brazen, branded brow of a mother, but no wife, and received into her arms an outcast of a child.

“What is it, my pastor? I have not gone and preached to the spirits that are in prison; yet it is written that my Master and yours did this. What are these but lost sheep, fallen, soiled, covered with bruises and wounds? And what am I, my Monsieur, save a wandering sheep whom the Good Shepherd took pity upon and brought back into the fold? There is but one heart and one brain in humanity, if you knew it. You will know it, my poor friend, when your own heart is rent and broken, and pierced and wrung, and when it can only bleed inwardly for itself, while outwardly it wipes its own tears off the cheeks of others,

and binds up its aching wounds in the stabs and gashes which are all around it.”

“And has *she*, too, suffered so much?” inquired Mr. Hoadley, with a gape of bewilderment, as he pointed to Yolande.

“Certainly no,” Grand’mère corrected him. “She will suffer yet, poor little one, for it is her destiny. In waiting she has great faith; and know you not, Monsieur, that faith removes mountains?”

When old Caleb Gage, called as promptly by the tolling of the death-bell at Sedge Pond as a soldier by the bugle call, came across from the Mall, Mr. Hoadley witnessed another marvel. The old Methodist entered in among these groaning, writhing, cursing men and women, and drew aside the curtain which divided them, not from hell, but from heaven. He showed them the Prince of Life, with the marks of his

cross upon Him, bending down from the Father's right hand, as if saying, "Look up, I have suffered and travailed for you; and now both the work and the warfare is finished. There is nothing left for you to do but to look up. Only believe, and your pains and sorrows and evil behaviour are all past and done with. There remain for you but the Father's kiss, the best robe, the ring for your hand, and the shoes for your feet, for to-day you shall be with me in Paradise."

Caleb Gage knew no other gospel than that gospel of freest, fullest salvation. He had announced it along with Mr. Charles Wesley as freely and fully at the foot of the gallows-tree at Tyburn as elsewhere. And when the condemned criminals passed one after the other to death, with strange meltings of their hardness and hope dawning in their faces, he, too, had counted the

hours he had spent with them as among the happiest, most glorious hours of his life.

Mr. Hoadley, in after days, declared solemnly that he had seen miracles of grace wrought at this time. Before the persuasions and the wrestlings in prayer of Grand'mère, and the perfect assurance of Caleb Gage, he had seen the chief of sinners receive the Gospel like little children; the ignorant and the out-of-the-way drink in the glad tidings; the scales fall off eyes long spiritually blind; the dead heart and conscience come back to life in a day—in an hour. He had seen faces of every type of coarseness and forbidding repulsiveness change in the twinkling of an eye, and wear traits of compunction, gratitude, and devotion, which they had never worn before—at least, not since they had rested on mothers' bosoms or fathers' knees. Mouths

which had foamed forth profanity and obscenity when he first came within reach, now poured forth praises of God and blessings of men. And although not all of those to whom Grand'mère and Caleb Gage came responded to the call—some being steeped in grudging stupidity, rancour, and despair to the last—yet enough did so for Mr. Hoadley to have witnessed the awfully glorious harvest of life in death.

Grand'mère, old Squire Gage, and even Yolande took the scenes to a certain extent as matters of course—rejoicing or sorrowful as they were moved, but never thunder-struck or shaken to the centre of their being. But on Mr. Hoadley the effect was remarkable. He beheld, wondered, doubted, questioned, and believed. At last came an occasion when he went home and shut himself up in his room in the Castle for hours, and was found by a servant faint and

bathed in sweat, as though he had recovered from a trance, but with his face bright and shining; and though he forbade the servant to speak of it, he never denied that he had returned to the world a new man. He went that moment, and stood by one of the dying beds which Mr. Gage could not attend; he held up the cross which another had carried, and the crown immortal and eternal which another wore. Thus he shed light into the deep gloom of a dark soul, and sped it to a realm of light.

“There is nothing worth but the saving of souls, Grand’mère,” vowed the impulsive young man; “henceforth I dedicate myself to the work to which I was unworthily consecrated.”

“The good God register your vow in the archives of Heaven, my son, and the Holy Ghost lend you strength to keep it!” exclaimed Grand’mère, weeping over him,

and kissing him on each cheek as a son indeed.

“The Lord will not forsake the good work which He has begun,” declared the young man with solemn confidence.

“Only remember always, my friend, that it is God and not man who saves souls, that He saves them in a thousand ways, and that his ways are not as our ways,” Grand’mère cautioned him, earnestly.

Thenceforth Mr. Hoadley worked with Grand’mère and Yolande incessantly, was their right-hand man, their fellow-soldier, their son and brother in the good fight. Meantime, the shyness between Squire Gage and the women passed away. It had been somewhat indefinite and intangible on both sides; but there it had been, and only such common works of loving-kindness as they were now engaged in could have dispersed it. And Squire Gage, seeing the

young priest with his new commissions, which invested his sensitive, intellectual face with new nobility and manliness, thanked God and took courage. But sometimes he would sigh for the Mall and his son as he watched the young man and the girl in such constant association. Not that either of them, above all the girl, betrayed much consciousness of their close communion in the engrossing anxiety and interest of the mortal sickness and desolation at Sedge Pond. Still, the Squire could not help observing and summing-up Yolande's fine qualities—her soft touch, her light foot, her womanly endurance, intelligence, and resource, as well as her buoyance and cheerfulness under actual difficulties, which were beginning to rise and relieve her habitual gravity. His eyes would turn towards the young girl as she delivered her report to Mr. Hoadley, as she entrusted him with commissions,

and took him to task for their execution, as she shared with him the rosemary, sweet majoram, and thyme, which were then held potent against infection from the most terrible of epidemics ; and he bethought him of Lucy Gage, who had made himself thrice blest, and sighed over young Caleb's loss.

Young Caleb did not absent himself from the strife between the great forces of physical and moral good and evil. But he came ostensibly to support his father, in reality to tire out his good horse, and put his shoulder to the wheel for every one needing help, doing more in his own way in an hour than Mr. Hoadley could do in three. In another respect, young Caleb Gage stood dumb before the chaplain, because the young Squire's turn was not for preaching and teaching :

“ Though,” he said one day to his father, “ I trust, sir, I could do and die.”

But Grand'mère's natural French overture, which had proved such a complete failure on English soil, had erected an insurmountable barrier between young Caleb and Yolande. The mutual affront had sunk so deep that the breach was too wide for any hope of its being repaired. The young man, indeed, might look with a certain curiosity at the girl whom, on their first introduction, he had fancied so proud and learned as to look askance on a country fellow like him ; and he could not choose but admire one who had not her equal in those parts, and might even speculate with the faintest instinct of regret on what might have been if she had not been offered to him. But now of course Mademoiselle Dupuy was destined for Parson Hoadley, to whom he only took as yet in a modified way, since their temperaments differed widely, and in youth differences of tempera-

ment rarely exist without corresponding jars. This was true without Caleb's having any suspicion of the chaplain's sudden goodness ; he was too good and candid himself for that. Nor, thick-headed as he called himself, would he have denied Mr. Hoadley's lately awakened eloquence, for the young Squire had too much sense and feeling not to appreciate a natural orator when he heard him.

And if Caleb Gage remained utterly estranged from Yolande, with no chance whatever of familiar intercourse, the relations between him and Grand'mère were infinitely worse. He had a positive pique against his father's ally and dear friend, who had done only one thing to offend him, and who, though she kept away from him now with a kind of meek, pathetic dignity, bore him no ill-will in return. So far as Caleb Gage the younger could enter-

tain active dislike against a woman old enough to be his grandmother, he entertained it against her. He said to himself, as Madam at the Rectory had said, on her first acquaintance with Grand'mère, that her dress, her beauty, her sensibility, and the graphic emphasis which she could not help putting into most things, were attributes unbecoming a woman of her age and situation, and savoured of flightiness and eccentricity. He would have had Grand'mère theoretically clothed in sackcloth and ashes, such as Madame her daughter-in-law wore, although he had not liked Madame Dupuy particularly in their slight acquaintance. The young Squire, remembering Mr. Fletcher of Madeley, did not quarrel with his father for being the old Madame's sworn champion. But as for Hoadley's veneration and enthusiasm for the

old Frenchwoman, he could only regard these as means to an end.

Thus it happened that when Grand'mère's popularity was at its height at Sedge Pond, and when the villagers were murmuring blunt acknowledgments of their offence in having rejected her because of her foreign nation, and were muttering blessings on her as she ministered to them, there was one dissentient voice. And it came from a quarter which would have been perfectly incredible to Yolande, and which, if she could have credited it, would have been apt to overwhelm her acquired tranquillity with a flood of bitterness and doubts of her kind.

The Rector was at his post without fail, and met the workers in his parish at every corner. He took their service more patiently than he was wont to do—nay, he even tolerated it as a co-operation permissi-

ble in an extraordinary strait, and excusable by the license due to a stranger like Grand'mère, and by the presence of a churchman and clerical brother, Mr. Hoadley. But notwithstanding this concession, the Rector feared that his old bugbear, the impracticable methodistic Whig, Squire Gage of the Mall, and Grand'mère Dupuy, with her extravagant, rebellious bias as a French-woman and a Huguenot, were seducing and perverting the dabbling, sentimental lad of a chaplain, who had gone off on a new tack, and was travelling fifty times faster by it than even the quondam captain of a slaver, Newton of Olney, or the bred grazier, Scott of Weston, thus preparing work for the bishops by and by.


The Rector could not go in with their doings, though he could not and would not, in the present crisis, stop them by force. He had his own views of faith and repent-

ance, and he could make them agree with Scripture according to his logic. He would pray and read the service with such as would accept his offices, and he was far from refusing grace to any man. But the direct addresses, impassioned representations, sublime dogmas, and swift changes of the Methodists, with their agonies and their transports, were not in the line of the reserved, orderly, formal Rector, any more than lay preaching and the public ministration of women were. He had no disposition to cavil at the doctrine of original and abounding sin; but that application of it which reduced all men to one level, and placed in the same rank his honest, faithful, gallant hero, laid to rest where his colours had been planted, on the plains of the far West, with the greatest thief, liar, and craven vagabond in Sedge Pond, was all but hateful to Mr. Philip Rolle. Yet, if the

Rector could not understand, he would not persecute—nay, he rather looked on with thrills of sympathy in the midst of his strong objections, and granted magnanimously that it were no wonder though the whole world went after the performance.

CHAPTER VIII.

Madam Rolle's Calendar.

R. PHILIP ROLLE'S summary of the duty of women was that they should keep house, obey their husbands, and bring up children. His aversion to their engaging in any public service was not decreased by his seeing the uncouth wench, Deborah Pott, after having had a brush with the enemy on her own account, creeping out of the Shottery Cottage, hanging on the skirts of Grand'mère and Yolande, and beginning to give very awkward assistance. Deborah somehow reminded the Rector of Black Jasper, and he could not help feeling that if these new-fangled liberties continued,

he would have his "fellow" mounting the pulpit and giving out the psalm at least once a day over his master's head. Mr. Rolle retired to his Rectory, now empty of his particular woman-kind, and he set himself to bring vividly before his mind a sweeter, more womanly, and more excellent way.

In the quiet night, when all the Rectory servants were asleep, the Rector sat in his room. He could not rest, so he went to Madam's little Tunbridge box and opened it, for he had the key of it, as he had the key of her heart, there being no corner in all her domain, or in all her thoughts, which Madam kept close from the Rector. There was something in itself suggestive in seeing so manly a man tenderly handling and turning over a woman's hoards ; and yet it is men like the Rector, autocratic, imperious, and stoical, who prize above all things the

softness, even the helplessness, of women, and who, in their relations to women, have an inexhaustible wellspring of tenderness, forming a striking contrast to the rock from which it issues. With jealous care and delicate reverence Mr. Rolle disarranged his wife's treasures in order to find what he sought. Yet they were valueless treasures in all save kindred eyes, and he knew them all well. Chief among them were a pair of worn fringed gloves, which had been his first gift when he had chosen her out of a country-house full of girls for his partner, on that Twelfth Night long past, and a yellow copy of exceedingly stilted verses, written on a similar occasion. He pshawed at the verses as his own boyish rubbish, but Madam valued them as highly as ever, and was often as near angry with him as she could be for wilfully depreciating what she kept so carefully preserved in a pouncet box.

There were two or three letters on journeys before and immediately after their marriage, containing elaborate advices for the improvement of her mind, and even of her spelling, with dictatorial directions as to what she was to read, think, and believe; and these struck him at this time of day as strangely pragmatical. The laboriously prepared sermon which he had delivered before an erudite bishop, and his favourite homily, which he had got put into print with some small detriment to his purse, he found carefully folded, with rose leaves laid between the pages to scent them. And he came on locks of hair of their three children. Two of them were Captain Philip's; a yellow curl, the companion rings of which had met no rougher touch than the pat of the Rector's hand and the kiss of Madam's lips; and a dark brown lock, the fellows of which Madam had seen, in vision, dank

with death sweat and glued together with life blood. There were also two cockades, one which Captain Philip had worn when a baby to distinguish him as the Rector's boy, for Madam had been "so mad" when he was mistaken for a girl; and another which the young officer had carried through fire and smoke, as a political and regimental badge. In fellowship with these were Captain Philip's letters to his mother, tattered with much reading, most of them ending with the loving assurance, "till I see you again."

But it was none of these the Rector was in search of. It was something of a slightly different character, which he knew was among the papers. It was a sort of private calendar which Madam had made of the Psalms in the prayer-book that she had used since she was a girl. Passages had been marked, and little slips of paper inserted, of different

dates and different stages of handwriting. They were the shy, simple, devout records of a modest, purely domestic life. At length the Rector found it, and read in it here and there what touched the core of his manly heart:—

“Psalm 23rd.—My earliest remembrance is being kept out of bed by old nurse Simmons, in order to astonish mother on her coming back from evening service, by my childish proficiency in this psalm. As it was my earliest, so may it be my latest study.”

“Psalm 119th.—In my youthful years I was so given up to ambition and self-conceit as to undertake to say this whole psalm by heart to Grandfather Horner, who was to give me a silver crown-piece in return. I need not say that pride got a fall and I lost my crown-piece, for I wearied of my task, and my memory broke down before I was half done. *Mem.*—To ask the Rec-

tor whether Grandfather Horner acted judiciously in setting me such a hard task, thus stirring up my spirit of emulation, since Sister Betty and Brother Joe tried too. For long it was only by a mighty effort that I got over a dislike to that jewel of the experimental psalms; and I am sorry to say Brother Joe avers that he dislikes it to this day."

"Psalm 1st.—In preparing for my confirmation, my clergyman, Mr. Moultrie, hath hoped that I shall prove 'like a tree planted by the water-side.' I fear me 'twill be but such a crooked sapling as that which we have all laughed at in the cherry orchard. Yet may not God be tender of what men laugh at?"

"Psalm 4th.—Thou hast put gladness in my heart since the time that the corn, and wine, and oil increased.—Word is come that father hath lost the Hurstpierpoint

suit. So that though he is still a gentleman of moderate substance, me and my sisters have no longer a chance of being heiresses. We have made up our minds to our loss more easily than we thought to do, and will not grudge the property to our cousins Hepworth. We made quite merry last night on being spinsters, and living on narrow incomes like Aunt Polly, who mother affirms is the grig of her family. Father hath not been so little humorsome for a long time as during this week, because he says he can endure certainty, like a man of spirit as he always was; and indeed his temper was ruffled by waiting, and by what he called lawyers' quibbles. In addition, Brother Joe has given up all thought of going to town to study in the Temple and learn to be a fine gentleman. He tells me that he minds not the deprivation, for he always preferred country folk and the green

fields, which will make home so much less lonesome this winter than if we had been rich."

"Psalm 39th.—Our Betty hath sunk into a decline, and passed away from our arms. How can I write it? The last time the parson was with her he read this psalm,—’twas the last one Betty heard, when her beauty was consumed away, ‘like, as it were, a moth fretting a garment.’ Father said, had we gotten Hurstpierpoint, the removal to moister air might have stayed the waste, or he might have carried his darling to the court physicians; but she opened not her mouth to murmur or complain, because she followed One who was obedient unto death. And I, too, will become dumb, for it is His doing."

"Psalm 24th.—Mr. Philip Rolle, who is a distant kinsman of father's, and who came to see us this Whitsuntide, did say that the

verse, 'The earth is the Lord's, and all that therein is; the compass of the world, and they that dwell therein,' would form a fine inscription for trades halls and halls of commerce, not forgetting the Houses of Parliament. He is a great historian, and he said also, of the 48th Psalm, that the verse, 'Thou shalt break the ships of the sea through the east wind,' would have made as good a motto as that chosen for the medal our Queen Elizabeth struck to commemorate the defeat of the Armada. Mr. Philip Rolle's opinion must be worth recording, as he is already in holy orders, and is said to be a young man of uncommon parts and promise, for so fine a gentleman."

"Psalm 6th.—'My beauty is gone for very trouble, and worn away because of all mine enemies.' This day se'ennight was the first day Dolly and me and Anne Ventnor were permitted to get up and see ourselves

after the modified pox, which we need not have had but that my cousins Mapleton would not keep away from the Hall when they had a case of the natural pox at the Great House. At last they took the alarm, and then they insisted on mother having all of us inoculated who had not been already done. I was not in a fit state for it, as I had suffered lately from sick-headaches, brought on by Cousins Mapleton making mischief between Brother Joe and father, and leaving us to bear the brunt of it. The inoculation has gone worst with me, so that I have almost had as bad a bout as if I had been afflicted with the original disease, and have come out as thin as a whipping-post, and with my face all scarred and swollen like a marred turnip. Somebody will not know me again when he comes back to the neighbourhood, and I don't mean to help his memory. The worst of it is (and it made

me cry like a baby last night), that cousins take the credit to themselves for getting me inoculated, and say my sufferings show how virulent the real malady would have been with me, had I ever caught it, which was not likely unless busybodies had brought it to me. In the same manner they take credit for getting poor Joe in grief, professing that it will be a lesson to him not to take his game off his elders and betters in future. Cousins Mapleton never see that they do anything wrong. I have not forgotten our Betty and how lovely and pleasant she was, and how very meek under God's hand; but then it was God's hand, while this only seems the hand of Cousins Mapleton."

Below this entry was added, in the comparatively recent angular hand in which Madam copied out her recipes, and occasionally, with a touch of pride, wrote extracts from the Fathers for the Rector's use: "What a

peevish, vain fool of a lass I must have been to make so solemn an application appropriate to such a trifle, though I do remember it seemed no trifle to me in those days. I wonder why Mr. Rolle had aught to do with me, as if he would have demeaned himself to mind a painted skin (not that I ever touched a paint pot in my life—I'd liefer touch pitch, and for all my outcry I was as plump and fair as ever in three months time). Cousins Mapleton were perfectly right; as I have reason to be thankful, since there are constantly cases of small-pox occurring in Sedge Pond. I have brought myself to take the same precaution with the completest success in the case of my lad and my little lasses. Even about Brother Joe I can trace his becoming solid, putting away childish things, and showing himself mother's best stay and chief support in her widowhood, to his being forced to appease father's wrath at

the outrages committed on my cousins Mapleton's credulity and nerves by new alarms of the Scotch rebels, and mock thefts of jugged hare from the larder."

"Psalm 45th.—'Hearken, O daughter, and consider, incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house.' Philip hath not chosen that verse, or any part of it, for my posy ring; not that he reckons it would be profaning the psalm, which, he says, was an epithalamium or nuptial song, like the Song of Solomon in its day; but that he considers it, while a fit, inspired figure for a state of nature which ought to be forsaken for a state of grace, at the same time an Eastern sentiment, and not to be taken too literally. He is not afraid of any rival in the oldest, dearest friend I have, but gives me leave to cherish them to the utmost. I wot he has no cause to fear any of them."

“ Psalm 41st.—‘ Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy : the Lord shall deliver him in the time of trouble.’ Mr. Rolle hath very discreetly reprov’d a sinner of high rank by causing to be laid on his escritoire a copy of this verse, though the upshot is that the sinner (following my husband’s good example—I shall mention no names) hath crushed up the writing, trampled it under foot, called the writer an intolerable meddling jackanapes, and ruined the poor man without delay. But my husband has played his part, and it is only because his conscience is tender that it pricks him, and tempts him to declare that he was an intolerable, meddling jackanapes—leastways, a weak, cowardly fool, to hit on so shallow and underhand a plan ; he will never do so again, and he will indemnify the poor man for the injury out of his own pocket ; which is like my good man,

both the taking the blame upon himself, and the indemnification.”

“ Psalm 13th.—‘ Consider and hear me, O Lord my God ; lighten mine eyes, that I sleep not in death.’ If it be thy will, good Lord, deal mercifully with me, and spare me to the best and noblest of husbands, to whom I think I am with thy consent a little needful, and to my unborn babe, when my pangs come upon me.”

“ Psalm 16th.—‘ The lot is fallen to me in a fair ground : yea, I have a goodly heritage.’ Make me thankful and humble of heart, my Lord and Saviour, in that I have been kept to see this day, when good old Mr. Butler hath made a Christian of my boy, giving him the name of his worthy father, my Lady Rolle and Brother Joe standing for sponsors.”

“ Psalm 56th.—‘ They daily mistake my words : all that they imagine is to do me

evil.' If it were but my poor words, I should not mind ; but the Rector's own wise and righteous words ! I could not have thought it of Lucy Gage ; it is all along of that Whig and Methodist Squire to say that Philip Rolle's sermons narrow and shame the grand comprehensive scheme of salvation ! Pray, who should know how to deliver doctrine, give his testimony against heresy, and hold the oracles of God for the people, if not a good priest, trained for and faithful to his work, a gently-born, just, learned, and consecrated man ? What insubordination to bring into the parish ! What ingratitude for all the Rector has done and suffered for them ! Well-a-day ! the world is a wicked and weary world, not one whit better than in the days of King David."

" Psalm 104th.—Men's faint echo of the song of the morning stars, and the shout of the sons of God, when the great Creator

made this ravishing world. Surely it will always be very good, in spite of all the lying lips and sharp tongues speaking vanity. Methinks so on this May morning, when the Rector has stepped out from his study window on to the lawn and paddock, bare-headed, and called me from my housewifery to look at the promise of the apple-blossoms, and to listen to the thrush in the lilac-bush ; and little Philip can stretch out his hands for the daisies. The world is very good still. It is men who are bad ; but even they will grow good at last, and then the true Golden Age will have come, the Rector says."

"Psalm 45th.—'Gird thee with thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou most mighty, according to thy worship and renown.' My soldier hath marked this verse in the psalter in acknowledgment of the Captain of his salvation. May He be a shield


over his soldier's head in the day of battle, and acknowledge him in the field of Armageddon.

“Psalm 21st.—‘He asked life of thee, and thou gavest him a long life, even for ever and ever.’ My boy, it was not the life for ever and ever that I asked for you then, nor did you ask it for yourself, my Philip, for in our short sight you had much to live for. You were much wanted here, my son, my son. But the crown of pure gold yonder will make up for all the crowns of brass and iron here, and the felicity which is everlasting will atone a thousandfold for all the sweet human ties untimely blighted and nipped in the bud. The joy of His countenance, which maketh you glad, my dear, dear lad—what sun on earth could shine like that smile of the Master's face? What king's, or conqueror's, or bridegroom's bliss could approach to the gladness of

the loyal, loving servant raised to that full light? Your mother would not grudge it to you, but that she is at once that strongest and weakest thing on earth—a mother.”

CHAPTER IX.

The Last Relic of the Galleys.

HE epidemic was abating at Sedge Pond, and Grand'mère had consented for a little space to rest and be thankful. She had sent Yolande abroad one evening to gather the herbs which were in the season of drying, while she herself dozed in her great chair. Suddenly she started up and rubbed her eyes. Her expression became one of mingled endurance, resolution, and triumphant faith, which made her features look young again with their air of early heroism.

“What is it, Philippine?” she asked quickly. “Have I dreamt. I could have

sworn I heard the shots of the dragonnades once more—saw my brother Blaise led off with the rest of the gang, and received all that was left to me of the father of Hubert from the galleys.”

“What wonder, Maman?” protested Philippine. “I am always thinking of those cruel mockings and scourgings, and of the sainted martyrs.”

“But, my girl, I did not think I heard and saw the things with which I was familiar before you were born. What can it mean, my friend? Is it that my time is come, think you? Would God the little one were come home, that I might bless her with my last breath, if it be His will.”

“No, no, thou wilt not leave us, *memère*,” besought Philippine; “thou art all that is left us now of the good old times, and they were good in spite of their woes—when we were a spectacle to men and to angels, and

the devil could find no fault in us. And now that we have left our first love, and cast in our lot with this Sodom of an England, thou wilt not abandon us and carry away all that we still have of the faithful and the *patrie* at the bottom of our groaning hearts?"

"Ah! I have it," cried Grand'mère, springing up, almost as light of foot as a maiden; "console yourself, my Philippine, I may live to grow a babe again. It is not the nearness of death which is unlocking the closed chambers of memory; it is the face of my dear old M. Denis Landre, in the porch. Say not that I alone am left you, when, if he will deign to turn back his frills, you will see on the worn bones of eighty what ate into the tender flesh of sixteen. He is the last Reformed of the oars. He was chained to the benches for eighteen weary years. But he was young, kept his reason,

and, escaping at last, came to this peaceful court of England, where he hath dwelt and laboured nearly half a century. He is on his summer round to watch the habits of God's creatures, and win models from them for his art, and if you ever did honour to a hero, my reverent Philippine—if you would entertain, not the three Magi, but a soul come out of great tribulation, I tell you this will be the day for it."

By the time Yolande returned, Monsieur Landre had gone out with Monsieur Dupuy to make some arrangements for pursuing his studies in the neighbourhood during the next week. It was in his absence that the girl heard the great news of his arrival. Her expectation had thus an interval in which to rise to the highest pitch before he re-appeared, and she should be presented in a tumult of awe and delight to the last living French Huguenot who, for conscience'

sake, had undergone the burning, fiery furnace of the galleys, and had come out without a hair of his head injured.

To Yolande's intense amazement, and all but utter disappointment, Grand'mère's *beau idéal* was a little grey rabbit of a man, dressed punctiliously, in a blue coat and laced red vest with flapped pockets, the latter bulging out incongruously with the stones, leaves, twigs, and skewered moths and beetles preserved in little boxes, for which he had a *penchant*. He pounced upon her before she had been well named to him, and charged her a little austere with blind blundering in bringing a wrong herb to Grand'mère.

“That,” said he, “is the Lady-glove, *gant de la dame, misé*, and a *campanule*, with which you have nothing to do. And you have gone and mistaken a great Marguerite for a *souci*. *Ouf!* where are your eyes,

then? In your pocket, or at the back of your hat, *hé?*”

Yolande, on her part, was almost disposed to ask him—Did the three Hebrew children not differ more from other Hebrews? Did they so outlive their supreme test and miraculous deliverance that they became only the foremost husbandmen, and builders of houses, and planters of vineyards, the foremost statesmen, and warriors, and bards of all the tribes throughout the strange land of Babylon? As for Monsieur Landre, he was absolutely silent when Madame Dupuy met him with a sounding apostrophe tremulous in its sincerity.

“It is thou, Monsieur, who hast defied the tyrant, whom the pains of hell could not turn from the truth, who preferredst the taskmaster’s whip and the fires of the noonday sun to abjuring the Word. What are we that thou art come under this poor

roof, among those who have done nothing, and who refuse any longer to believe anything? What can I do to make you more welcome, Monsieur? Permit me to salute the hem of thy redingote, and lay the hairs of my head in thy path."

He remained blank to all direct appeals to his old experience, and put aside every bold attempt to enlist his convincing eloquence as the last survivor and eye-witness of the tortures linked with the dismal tragedy of the galleys, for the purpose of satisfying the craving curiosity and breathless interest of another generation. But he would discourse by the hour, and pour out hard words by the bushel, till his voice grew husky with the burden, on the most minute specimen of wall-rue, and the most insignificant fly curling up a cylinder for itself out of a rose-leaf. Or he and Grand-mère, with the tears in their eyes, would

recall the noble old French cathedrals, from which their faith excluded them, though their fathers had built them. They would speak, till the listeners grew weary, of the balconies with screens of carved leaves and flowers, second only to nature's festoons and garlands, which alternated with shields of armorial bearings before the hotels of the nobility in the cities and provincial towns.

Monsieur Landre was a quaint little *savant* and artist, ludicrously solemn and absorbed in his studies, without any of Monsieur's blandness, Madame's passion, Grand'mère's imagination and fine sense, or Yolande's enthusiasm. A gruff, abrupt little man, with an exaggeration of self-respect and stoicism about him ; in fact, the most difficult man in the world to conceive chained to a bench and stripped to the waist, a blackened skeleton among rows of

blackened skeletons, bending mechanically to the oar in a sickening drudgery of degraded toil, varied by a sharp encounter with the English frigates when the galley-slave's flesh was torn, and the life which he was driven to hate was let out by the English shot; or if he escaped this, and was carried to the hospital a sorely-wounded man, he was still fettered to the bed on which he lay, because his stout heart could not believe in the celebration of the mass, and he would not bow his gaunt head at the elevation of the host.

When Yolande, after the two had retired to rest, complained to Grand'mère of the anomaly which the girl found in Monsieur Landre, Grand'mère tried to bring it within her comprehension.

“Denis Ange Landre,” she explained, “was never a sayer, but a doer; and a breach as wide as the Red Sea lies between

the two. For as many years as you have lived, my child, he was an exile in the foul mouths of harbours, and lying out on the same everlasting sea—birds and gross-eating fish soaring and swimming around him, and no change meeting him from day to day, and year to year, but the changing of the clouds, and of his harsh masters, the dropping off of his comrades, and the replacing of them by other worn faces.”

“Yes, good Grand’mère; but should such sufferings not have put him above such trifles?” asked Yolande.

“*Ouais!* I must finish. He makes his escape at last by a miracle of steadfastness and desperation, and hears that he has long been left an orphan without near kindred, and has lost all that he ever possessed of worldly goods. There is nothing left him here below but the green earth of God with its myriads of creatures, and the power of

copying them, to which he had been in training when he was carried away. And Yolandette lifts her nose and wonders that he throws himself into the study of these things, and clings to them with the devotion of a lover to his mistress! Denis Landre came back like a wild Orson, an outlaw. There were others who came back wilder still, their reason lost, memory dead, and faith only feebly flickering and feeling after its object, until it should be changed into sight. Go! You are a pretty girl to ask why such a one, poor and true, and keenly sensitive to all the defects and privations of these endless years, should desire to remedy them—not by a woman's moans, and pets, and sour grapes, but by seeking anxiously to acquire and employ the habits and practices of civilised life, even to the wearing of a perruque and a cane. What would you have instead? Do men's tongues wag when

the iron has entered into their souls? Do they not set their teeth, and are they not dumb for the rest of their days? In after years will they not shudder still, and turn their backs on the horrors of the past, as though on the ghastly *croquemort* of a dream? My word! the *petite* has gone to sleep on her woman's wit, to need such explanations. Why should she give herself the air of a sick cat because a great, good man—one of the best, bravest, and most modest I have known—is not a trumpeter of Gascony, a hero of the spectacle to please her? She does not know life, the *sabot*."

"Yes, Grand'mère, that is all true. I was a spoilt child, giving myself the air of buying sugar-plums at least. But tell me, had not Monsieur Hoadley right on his side, when he said there was nothing worth on earth but the saving of souls? These poor ones in the village here do but recover their

stifled, poisoned breath, and turn their dim distorted eyes back to the world, when behold there comes a man who went through calamities which lasted a score of dreary years, to which theirs were light as straws. Do you tell me he survived these, and succeeded in leaving them all behind him, in order to give himself up to bagatelles of club-mosses and midges?"

"That depends. Is nothing in the universe of God worth considering save men and their souls? But agreed that men are best worth men's consideration; is there only one way of saving souls? Is there anything common or unclean which God has put around man for the purpose of instructing him? Common or unclean! when every syllable on every page of God's book of nature reaches upwards to a marvel of rarity, purity, and excellence? For what? The satisfaction of its Maker, since

He regards all, and counts nothing beneath His notice? No more than this? They do not exist that He may be known in His works, that they may bear witness of Him, and that His saints may be perfected through them? How do you know that the growth of a flower or the life of the tiniest of God's creatures is not helpful for the growth of souls and the life of their life?"

"But to paint them upon plates and jugs, *ma mère*," argued Yolande; "to design little groups of cows drinking in a stream or lying lazily under a spreading tree for butter-dishes, and to paint shepherds and shepherdesses on vases, with garlands of oak-leaves studded with beetles to encircle them; to bend over the work, busy himself with it, and dream of it for days and days together—is it not a kind of idolatry, as Monsieur Hoadley says, and base and un-

worthy trifling for the last of the galley-slaves to demean himself with? *Fi, fi donc!* I cry with vexation, even but to think of it."

"Cry for yourself, my fine girl, a thousand times," protested Grand'mère; "as for Monsieur my young pastor and you, you are two very high and noble personages to be so far above the plates and the dishes! One of you has not been so long removed from the *bric-à-brac*; but that is the way of the *brouille*, and I am an ungenerous old *tête montée* to speak of it. For me, I believe that the doing of a thing well or ill, and not the special sanctity of the deed, is the proof of the hero, the saint, and, above all, the Huguenot; and that the question is not so much whether he erects a temple, or shapes a pair of pantaloons, as the world and the Church of Rome will have it. Let the potter turn but one cup in fair proportion, or let the painter reproduce one true

image, and the world of homely men and women is so much the better for him. And what is a stanch, battered galley-slave, that he should despise small gains, so that they are honest and good, and won by the best exercise of his faculties? *Ma mie*, if you will see the day of great deeds, you must not despise the day of small things, whether first or last. There have been worse things than galleys; there have been scaffolds. And who mounted them? Preachers and teachers alone? Not at all—workmen, labourers, men and women, skilled like Bezaleel in the weaving of tapestry and the executing of jewellers' work. It is true that Palissy only quitted the fountains in the Italian's garden to languish in the Bastille, but Goujon went straight from the torso in his *atelier*, to leave his own headless trunk stretched by the block."

"Say, then, Grand'mère, why Monsieur

Hoadley, who used to be idle and vain himself among the *gentilhommes*, is to-day laborious as an ox and serious as the moon ?”

“Can I tell you why Yolande is young ?” answered Grand’mère, with a smile. “Monsieur the pastor is young also, and he works in the dashing spirit of reaction and reformation. He is a new broom, and sweeps clean ; by-and-by he will be older and smoother, and will no longer tear both himself and the carpet. He will then give every one more of his due, be more tolerant, more charitable. And what then ? The world will cry, ‘*Voilà !* Monsieur the the pastor has grown weary, he has changed his mind once more.’ Believe it not, his *camarade*. He was sick and sorry with all his heart, and he took an oath, from which the good God will not let him go back. He will be a man in his Christianity yet—though not so mellow a man as Monsieur

Gage, or so strong a man as Monsieur Philip Rolle—but a man in his own fashion,” Grand’mère went on, after considering within herself, “a little with tinged severity, perhaps because of his early slackness and sin, which found him out always—not a dragon as now.”

“And I also am a dragon, Grand’mère?” demanded Yolande, with a mock curtsy and a relieved smile; “I humbly beg pardon of Monsieur Landre, but will he never tell us what it was to be a martyr, and what the galleys were like? for otherwise I see not that we are any better of them.”

“Have patience, my daughter,” cried Grand’mère.

Then Yolande had patience, and consented to look no longer for a demi-god in Monsieur Landre, but rather to regard him as a poor, tried human being, who had suffered the loss of all things here, although he

had fought the good fight and kept the faith ; and who, in place of being infinitely raised above men's weaknesses, was full of the eccentricities, oddities, and cross-grainedness of isolated men. Then the girl was ready to admit that the passion of the old galley-slave for nature and art was child-like, self-forgetful, and not without its greatness. She saw that he was full of choice information as well as of zealous devotion to his studies, and that what he could impart was pleasant information to receive, and good to act upon, while one dwelt in this creation of the Great Worker, who sees "now a sparrow fall and now a world." She could detect that the reverent, painstaking student was filled with interest manifold in God's broad Book, therefore he never tired of turning over the leaves and of heartily copying in his materials what he had got at first hand.

And when Monsieur Landre was no longer, as it appeared to him, rudely pressed and impertinently assailed on his inhuman agonies and sorrows, he would allude to them briefly, but naturally, of his own accord, in a dreamy, abstracted, or a solemn, somewhat weird way, which made the slightest reference more impressive than the amplest details. "I have a stiffness here, Madame Dupuy *mère*," he said, touching his throat; "but no, I was not born with a crick in the neck. We were neck-chained once in the hospital at Dunkerque, and I could not turn my head for a month, though there was a pot with vanille in the window just beyond me. I smelt it, and, *tête-bleu* ! how I wished to see it, and the swallows which I heard in the eaves. I saw them—never, psch ! The pot was knocked down and broken, and the swallows took their flight to Africa the day before we were removed."

“Gangrene, madame?” he exclaimed. “*Oui-da*, we had enough of the gangrenes when the *argousins* would only remove the chains from the senseless bodies which they cast into the sea. We would have given—Heaven and earth, I was going to say; but no, not Heaven, all but Heaven, my friends—to have been senseless for one day, one hour, when we carried tons weight of iron on bleeding, fractured limbs.”

“Little dogs, *misé*,” he told Yolande, with a shade of dry humour, “I love the little dogs. I am very happy that they were well-treated at your castle. Their name was once mine, and we are brothers, the little dogs and me. ‘Dogs of Huguenots,’ so they named us when one slave or another, educated by misery, got so clever under his education that he gave the slip to the chain and the bench, or when he grew mad and broke all his bones by leaping

sheer over the bastion, and all the fellow-slaves on the benches nearest him were bastinadoed as no dog would have been."

"Oh! how cruel!" said Yolande, thoughtfully.

"Bah! rest tranquil: the dogs who did it could not help themselves, they were made monsters of by the officers in authority over them, and they again by the great nobles and the ministers of state; and the priests told them all—and believed it themselves for the most part—that they were torturing us to save us, or at least other contumacious fellows like us, from perdition. It was a lie, but they believed it, and what would you have? If you were so unhappy as to believe that bastinadoing a man black and blue, or roasting him to a cinder, would save the undying soul of him for ever and ever, would you not try it? Faith of Denis Landre! I believe he would try it fast

enough. Forgive? I have nothing to forgive. Do not speak of that, Madame; it was all a horrible mistake, and it is over—at least for us Huguenots. Often the guards and officers were sorry for us, and helped us with rags and water and wholesome food, as far as their discipline would permit. One of them, a Turk—positively a turbaned Mahomedan—remembered me, caught a rare *mirliflore* of a bird for me, dried and stuffed it of himself, and after keeping it for quite ten months, brought it and in full day slipped it along with a cluster of figs into my sleeve, gravely nodding his proud head and long beard as he did so, in the port of Marseilles.”

Doubtless what helped Yolande to a more correct estimation of Monsieur Landre, was the circumstance of young Caleb Gage’s coming across the Frenchman in his rambling exploration of the country. Though

Mr. Hoadley had hastily and austere-ly condemned the old man, judging that his mind had become light and weak at the very least, Caleb Gage, on the contrary, struck up a friendship with him, Frenchman though he was ; and conceiving an immense respect and admiration for the man of science, the skilled modeller and mechanic, waxed loud in his praise. And young Caleb had another, and for the moment a bigger, blacker crow to pluck with Grand'mère for excluding him from the Shottery Cottage, by her foolish Frenchwoman's schemes, when a man was there who could have taught him so much, and from whom he would have been delighted to learn. Whether the world would ever honour Monsieur Landre as he deserved to be honoured, or not, he had not only maintained his views of the right through worse than death, but Caleb felt the Frenchman would leave his


mark in another form on the world's treasures, and contribute another lesson to its store-house of testimonies.

Yolande, with her subtle instincts, apprehended Caleb Gage's appreciation of Monsieur Landre, and his inclination towards the *savant*; and it not only caused the girl, who secretly admired and revered the young Squire, to become a docile, intelligent, eager disciple of the naturalist, who, like all right noble teachers, valued a docile, intelligent disciple, and exerted himself to meet her wants and pour into her thirsting mind rivulets from his own stream of knowledge; but it caused her to take a simple, pure, womanly pride in her association with Monsieur Landre, and in his friendship for her, the true child of Grand'mère. And Caleb Gage would have given his riding-whip and his hunting-boots, his fowling-piece and his fishing-rod, to have been the privileged par-

taker of the trouble Monsieur took with her, and of the acquisitions she was making in the branches of knowledge. Monsieur Landre, who was master in so much which the young Squire prized, did not scorn the head and the heart which the tyro had rejected. Whether the day should ever come that Yolande would meet Caleb Gage on his own and Monsieur Landre's ground as an equal and more, was very doubtful ; but come or come not, Grand'mère, Monsieur Landre, France, and womanhood should have no reason to blush for their child.

CHAPTER X.

Fading.

“ND now all the people love Grand'mère.” So Yolande ended an enthusiastic account of the doings of Grand'mère in a conversation which she had with Monsieur Landre, close upon their parting.

“Not *all* the people, my mademoiselle.”

“Yes, yes, Monsieur, all ; for Grand'mère served all,” repeated Yolande proudly.

“The very worst motive for fickle people to act upon,” muttered Monsieur Landre. “Had it been because the people served Madame the Grand'mère, I should have had less fear.”

“Fear, Monsieur!” exclaimed Yolande, making large eyes. “How fear?”

“I cannot tell, but I love not popular *émeutes*, either of wrath or gratitude. I mean that I trust them not. Gratitude—yes, that is a quality honourable and lovely—in a heart which knows its why and wherefore, wholesome as bread; but it is apt to be a simple *fureur*, like heady wine, given to ferment, in the unthinking and unstable heart of a crowd. It is in the tail of the mob which shouts ‘hosanna’ that the venom lies *perdu*. But I have done wrong to speak of such things when they cannot be prevented. Behold, enough of them. Let us wait upon Providence, and the fortunes of France may come in. Who knows?”

Yolande was not satisfied, but felt uneasy. Monsieur Landre had set her thinking, and had shaken her faith in the regard felt by

the villagers of Sedge Pond, which had been born and bred of favours all on one side. She knew that some of them had been brutal in their former lives, and she saw not a few of them returning, almost before the plague had flown, to their old evil habits. They were growing shy, too, of Grand'mère, and sulky, even to bearing a grudge against her who was a silent reproach to them, while she hardly ever spoke to find fault with any of those whom she had succoured. She trusted, hoped, and waited for the fruit which might hang white and heavy, in place of the mildewed, poverty-stricken seed of her experience, when the place which knew her should know her no more. "If we but take a few hostages we have done well," cried the high-hearted old woman, cheerily, as she looked at the uncouth Deborah Pott and a few others. But the young woman was

cruelly disappointed at the revival of the irreverent wakes, the bloody fights, the hard-drinking bouts, and also at the coolness and hostile feeling between the Shottery Cottage and its neighbours, now embittered by the blinding shadow of a wrong.

This disappointment to a nature like Yolande's, at once impulsive and introverted, the warning of Monsieur Landre, and the cessation of the pleasant and healthful lessons which she had got from him, either preyed on her health, or else a sudden failure of strength developed all the fear, distrust, and dismay which were at the root of the girl's heart. This was the last lingering case of the illness bred of the summer's heat. It came on after the briony berries were hanging ripe in the hedges, and the leaves were crimson, orange, and grey by the wayside. Taking the individual forms of nervous prostration,

wasting feverish fits, and aguish chills, Yolande's sickness was of a dangerous kind.

At its commencement, Yolande, who as yet had known nothing of disease, whose pure, pale cheek had been until now as perfectly healthful as the buxom red-rose faces of Milly and Dolly Rolle, was keenly alive to every sinking power and strange new pang; and while she showed a woman's endurance and meekness, she yet, with the swiftness of her age, sex, and simplicity, made up her mind that she should die.

It was hard to go away even to the good God and Father—to the blessed Saviour and Elder Brother, even though her childhood and youth had been passed in the shade of exile, among fugitives in a foreign country. Notwithstanding that her opening womanhood had received a blow which still thrilled it with a sense of tribulation,

vague pain, and inextinguishable yearning, and though every other pulse of being was beating low, yet life was very sweet to her, as to other young creatures. It was hard to quit the fields she knew and the living things that dwelt in them, just when she was learning every day to understand and prize them more and more ; hard even to leave the villagers who would not abandon their shocking, shameful sins, although they had been saved by a great deliverance.

She felt it hard to part even from Deb, whose elaborate ministrations and their collapses made her still laugh weakly ; and from Prie, whose softened harshness now made her cry. She thought with pensive tenderness of Monsieur, who would not miss her greatly, so long as he had the dear old mother, but who looked astonished and somewhat troubled at her coming before him in this matter of prematurely fading

away. As for Madame, it grieved her to see her child ; the mother's set face said little and much ; her strung faculties seemed to need neither rest nor refreshment, and she scouted at sleep and food for herself, remaining a grim watcher and dumb suppliant against Death, who approached with the crashing step of a conqueror over what was mortal, though Christ had died, yea, was risen again.

Ah! and the tears rose to Yolande's eyes as she looked on Grand'mère, tender and true, bright with a tremulous brightness. For why should Grand'mère give way? Who should sustain the drooping spirit of her darling, if not she? Who should uphold, fan, and cherish the flickering flame of life till it revived, if not she? And should she be doomed to mourn for a short but awfully sharp separation, the time for mourning would come all too soon. But

now, she would not sin against the long-suffering delicacy and modesty of true womanhood by untamed bursts of passion and the abandonment of anguish; she would not thus cloud the close of the young days, which might be running out faster than the river to the sea, nor rudely shake the golden sands of life by her sorrowing.

At first Yolande was full of pathetic care and longing sorrow for Grand'mère's chastened grief. "What will you do, Grand'mère?—what will you do?" was the constant cry, varied by fond, anxious plans of how Prie was to water the *jardinière*, and Deb to sleep on the mattress on the floor. *Memère* was to read other books than the Huguenot memoirs; Monsieur was to go no more journeys to London and Norwich; and Yolande would be almost satisfied if there could only be found an orphan child of the *émigrés* of Spitalfields or Canterbury

for Grand'mère to call 'Yolandette,' to lead by the hand, caress, and bless. Then she would utter waking, startling cries :

“ Oh, heavens ! she is standing there still—is it not so ? Why does no one bring the *fauteuil* ? Sit down, dear Grand'mère ; lay your cheek on the cushion, *là, là* ; she has had no *goûter*. Why does no one mix the salad and pour out the almond milk ? Eat and drink, Grand'mère ; go into the garden, my heart, and see if the jasmine tree is still powdered like a marquis, and if the walnuts are as big as beans, and if the Reine Claudes are blushing, as they used to do in France.”

So long as the excitement lasted, no fervent, steady, assurance of Grand'mère's could quiet the disorder of the earnest affections. She would say, “ I shall do well, little one. I lean on the *fauteuil* ; I eat and I drink. Shall I bring you a sprig of the jasmine, and

lay it on your pillow? Fie! let not your cheeks shame it; let them grow less white, let them grow round as a periwinkle, and pink as a Daphne, my girl."

But Yolande of herself soon drifted gradually into that second stage of illness when God's finger-touch calms the ruffled feelings, quiets the loving cares, and replaces them by passive submission so perfect that it might be taken for apathy, but for the conscious, deliberate surrender of responsibility, the transfer of trust to another, and the reverent appeal to God for all, save the bodily ailment—a submission which lifts the sufferer above the world.

And thus Yolande lay, removed from her friends, as all in sore sickness are, except from those who hover and cling round them, in the altogether unnatural and exceptional life of the sick-room, where prevails permanent twilight—something between the last

sunset and the new day. All sounds are muffled and dull there, and all interests are concentrated in the spring which issues from one personality—a personality to all appearance fast ebbing and receding from the grasp of kindred personalities, like the last wave of a low sea in spring tide. Yolande lay thus, waiting till the question of life or death, which she had already answered for herself, should be decided by another tribunal where she had no voice.

The world without heard and apprehended that the young Frenchwoman of the Shottery Cottage lay a-dying. Regret was no doubt felt by some that they might never more see her forming a figure in the Watteau groups in the garden-bower, in the cottage-porch, or in the dark parlour, at which they had so often pointed clumsy fingers and scurrilously jeered. Some remorse would seize them as they thought of

her relation to the past ; for had not Yolande gone in and out among the people, and had she not caught the malady while minding their sick—though folk did say it had taken rather a queer turn in the foreigner, and was neither the falling sickness nor the putrid fever. Well-a-day, they were sorry for Mademzelle, that were they ; she was so young to be taken, though she was most likely a Jesuit or a spy, at any price. Yes, Yolande had her mourners among the rough villagers ; and as there is nothing like death for condoning offences, magnifying merits, and crowning the wearer with a very nimbus of glory, it is more than probable that had Yolande died now she would have escaped the tumult of sudden love subsiding and rebounding as suddenly into old deep-rooted aversion and disgust, and would have lived in the popular memory spiritualised as rude minds might

have spiritualised her into the pale pitiful ghost of a young dead girl who had made up for being French by passing betimes to the great congress of nations, where there is neither Jew nor Gentile, Greek nor Scythian. Nay, her very memory might have been a medium for reconciling the enmity which had existed between her people and the people of Sedge Pond, having gone, with the good deeds towards her neighbours in her hand, straight to Him of whom the parson preached that his command ever was, "Love your enemies."

The sister of the brazen woman whose child Yolande had taken into her pure arms one day sauntered up to the Shottery Cottage gate, and defied the virtuous indignation of Priscille by persevering in her question as to how the young Madame was—a faint blush on her bold brow the while. The fellow of the bad man whose curses

Grand'mère had not feared, and who cursed no more, but continued to cry mightily for a blessing upon her, so completely forgot himself and his horror of everlasting woe, that he went into the autumn fields to gather poppy-seeds and hop-berries to form a pillow, in order to procure an hour's sleep for the sick girl's restless head. Even at the alehouse, where the greatest jealousy existed against the frog-eating, grimacing foreigners, who, instead of contributing to the custom of the place, rather damaged it, fierce accusations and foul jests were for the time silenced. Indeed, the universal sentiment was—"Sin' the lass lies a-dying, we'll say nought again' them for the present. Let 'em a-be, we say, let 'em a-be; happen it may be our own turn next. We mun be decent, lads and lasses, in our nagging. Death wipes out the heaviest score."

Madam at the Rectory, leaving her

cherished solitude, came home from her sea-side refuge, and would have watched like a mother over Yolande for the sake of the old woman who had wept over Madam's Philip in his prime. She was scared, however, by the grim mother of Yolande, who would suffer no interloper by the bed where she stood sentry.

Milly and Dolly, those arrant cowards, not without an overpowering horror of Yolande's ghost haunting them if they failed in their attention, ventured near the cottage armed with fever water, civets' tails, and camphor bags; but once on the spot they threw away the civets' tails and the camphor bags, and, seated on the outer stair, looked up at the darkened window and bemoaned Yolande like the companions of Jephtha's daughter. Notwithstanding this, however, Milly and Dolly kept Black Jasper riding to and fro between the Rectory and

Reedham, and Madam was at her wit's end with false alarms about attacks of the epidemic shown in tangible and bewildering symptoms for days and days together.

Mr. Lushington, with his cauliflower wig and noble calves, his person drooping and slouching in its gorgeous peach and scarlet, appeared at the Shottery Cottage, no longer with gifts of pigs' puddings and crab apples, but shaking his powdered head ruefully, and holding his empty hands behind his back, saying huskily, "Who'd e'er have thought it? God have mercy on her! She's beyond we at this date, I take it."

But Yolande was not beyond the recognition of his voice, sonorous in its whisper; and she sent him a very girlish message, the glitter of her eye on fire, as she spoke, with the inward-burning fever.

Old Caleb Gage bent over Grand'mère's hand with the strangest and most wistful

half-apology, not merely for himself, but for his God. "I am but a man, my dear old Madame. I cannot tell a mother's heart, but my Lucy used to remind me that He whom we ignorantly worship is the great Father. In the name of the poorest and worst father here, I bid you remember that I love my boy not less, but more, when I elect him to a post of difficulty and danger, and bid him keep it, and suffer great things at it in his Father's name, and for his brethren's sake. And were God to bid him come up at once to his own mother, because there were far greater things for him to do with her yonder than any poor failures which he could make with me here, I would pray that, though I should die, I might not deny the right of Caleb's God and its wisdom and justice."

Grand'mère did not lose her meekness and faith then, although she shook and tot-

tered on the brink of the grave herself. "Go, my friend, and pray that my faith fail not also," she urged; and, like Joseph among his brethren, contained herself till all should be over.

But there was a change upon her when Mr. Hoadley, with a faint tap at the door in the dead of night, came to her with the appearance of having been torn by wild horses or by seven devils. He described himself as having been engaged in fighting the "old man within him," and he had gone without either food or sleep as long as Madame had done; but what a weak woman can do with comparative impunity drives many a strong man beside himself. Mr. Hoadley, by no means a strong man, had become possessed by an idea, grand enough in itself, for it was unearthly and devoted; but he was the more tempted on that account to make a horrible Moloch of it, and, in grim and

ghastly offering, to slay before it all his natural affections. He had been sleeping, so far as he had slept, and waking, in his parson's clothes during the crisis of Yolande's illness; he had wrestled in prayer and paced over miles of road, trying desperately to walk down his doubts. But he received no comfort, because the honest love which had led him back to duty and to God he miscalled idolatrous and unregenerate. Thus slandering and stamping upon it, he was scorched to the bone with its struggling flames, and besprinkled with the ashes of its humiliation. No wonder, then, that he looked like a crazy creature when he found his way to Grand'mère, and addressed her with an unstified groan.

“Woe to us, Madame,” he began, “for we have made for ourselves an idol, and it shall be broken. I call upon you to repent, as I seek to repent, in the depths of my misery.

I call upon you, her Grand'mère, to join with me in giving her up lest she should be spared to arise and work her own and our destruction, and to cover us with the degradation and shame of our idolatry. Behold the Bridegroom cometh! let us go out with our virgin to meet Him."

Grand'mère stood up before Mr. Hoadley, and for almost the first time in her life forgot the mortal agony of another in her own sufferings. She denied the charge, and declared it was he who dishonoured his God, and not she or her child.

"She was my child, and not my idol, man. God, who has a father's heart, gave her to me, and we together returned our thanks to Him. He bade me love and not hate her. He even deigned to compare his love to mine. If you tell me that I have not loved her sufficiently, I will believe you. If you say her God and Saviour want their

little one, then I answer that I understand that, for I want her also ; but it is right and necessary that my want should yield to theirs, though I should be bereft indeed. I see the necessity, and I will still cleave to the Giver and Taker, because in a very little time He will give back to an old woman the gift which was his originally, and which He counted so precious. But if you tell me she is an idol, and not an angel, and that she is smitten in order that I may be smitten, that I may be better by being mutilated, then I tell you, man, you speak the devil's lie, and not God's truth ; you bear false witness against your God."

So with her feeble hands the old woman put the young man, the most confounded of the two, out of her presence and away from the sacred precincts of the sick-house.

Young Caleb Gage came not all through Yolande's grievous illness ; and while she

had little or no sense of the torture which would neither let Mr. Hoadley go nor stay, she had an abiding sense of Caleb Gage's absence. She was not, however, heavily offended, Grand'mère having long ago plucked the cankering sting of shame out of the girl's heart. Caleb had not met her friends' choice with his choice, and it was inevitable that he should stay away; only his staying away made death, as it had made life, all the wearier and drearier for the obligation. He went about his ordinary occupations and amusements. He was still his father's right-hand man, and superintended the draining and trenching at the Mall which had been recently begun; and he rode to market, and hunted and fished and shot as usual. But sometimes, on these days of brooding stillness, he would lie for hours and hours among the ling on the Waüste in the silence and solitude, or take shelter there amid the

storms which in the woods herald the fall of the leaf. There was nothing to break in upon his engrossed senses save the drone of the bee ; the crack and whirr of the grasshoppers among the bristling wild grass, the furze, and rag-wort ; or the wail of the plover in the grey distance. There was no sight to force itself on his abstracted eyes save lonely savage nature, which had not yet acknowledged man for its master.

It was not because the young Squire was an intense lover and student of Nature that he withdrew at this time into her retreats. He did not much care whether he meditated in a well-beloved resort like the Sedge Pond Waäste, or within barren stone walls. It was more endurable for him at intervals to go aside and confront the spectre which haunted him, saying plainly, “ Here I am, do your worst ; I shall stand it and seek no reprieve.” What harm had he done, then ? He

had been led a dogged dance of sulky protest by a superannuated, fantastic old Frenchwoman, and that was all. Nay, he could abuse and make light of Grand'mère no longer, not even in the safe secrecy of his own thoughts, when he knew that the poor old soul was hanging over the death-bed of her darling.

As for that figure which rose up before him in the most unlikely places, haunting and harassing him in the half-foreign elegance and daintiness of the sober brocade, in the stately sweep of the train which never encumbered the youthful trip of the feet, and the dark hair and eyes, the pearly cheek, and the meditative mouth, Caleb Gage could make nothing of it. Only this he knew, he could not go on bearing malice against such unmistakable gifts and graces, because of a bad and impertinent French precedent. He had insisted upon resolutely turning his back

upon beauty of person and character, while now it seemed these were doomed to shrivel up and wither in their bud more speedily than even the grass of the field. How could he help asking himself, like the rest of the besotted world of Sedge Pond, Why had it come to this? Was there no help for it? How would it have been if the event had been different? Had his young wife or his plighted bride been wasting and waning like this harvest moon, how would it have affected him? And this Yolande had never seen her full lustre, but was dying out in her first quarter. He wished now that he had not been so hasty and ungenerous,—that he had been wise enough not to have taken the overture at the first word, overwhelming the friendly contracting parties with confusion and consternation. Of course he was not called upon to marry when and whom his father—good and reasonable though he was

—and the old Madame, who had pitifully burnt her fingers, thought fit; but then he might have gone more graciously about his objections. What did Yolande think of his contumely? Had it hurt her in her sweetness; for they said, and he believed, that she was sweet? Had she in her superiority cared for him the least, been inclined to stoop to such a snarling lout as he, who could not be so magnanimous as to make allowances for foreign ways and manners, but must needs appear to impugn the perfect modesty and delicacy which the greatest boor she had tended at Sedge Pond would have guarded as he would a lily in its sheath? Indeed he would far liefer have been the veriest boor of them all, than have so wronged any woman. And now had the very flower of womankind regarded him, not as a matter of expediency, but softly and kindly in her coyness, her French

maidenliness, and been so rewarded? Where was the use of his asking? He should never know what had been worth the world to know, if he had not been ill-conditioned, and other people, the best of them, had not bungled and blundered. Where was the use of his contrition? She would never know; she was dying in her chamber in the Shottery Cottage, ministered to by Parson Hoadley, who had valued her; and the death of the noblest, sweetest woman in the world would lie at his door, even though he would willingly have died to save her.

So the days went on, till the day of thanksgiving and rejoicing, when in the little world of Sedge Pond it seemed as if the sun all at once broke through a dense dark mist, dispelling the doleful shadows. More than one man and woman woke up as from a bad dream. They went out and

shook themselves like Samson, not thinking that the Spirit of the Lord might have departed from them, but rather wondering and smiling at their melancholy and their folly, returning with a will to former lines of conduct. Yolande, too, raised herself, very weak and faint, a very atom of a girl; but with all the difference between death and life in her looks and speech, and with earthly hope rekindled in her languid eye.

“But I do think I am better, Grand’mère,” whispered the girl. “I shall walk abroad with you again, after all; I who thought never to do it more. *Petite mère*, I am glad, and you also, all of you are glad. And you, who are not only wiser and purer, but stronger than I, do you render thanks to God for me to-day, and we shall pay our vows together when my sicknesses and infirmities are all gone.”

Grand’mère, in her own mode, rendered

thanks in her innermost chamber. She broke down utterly, and beat upon her breast at last, with a passionate protest :

“ What am I, unworthy wretch, to receive so many great mercies, when others cry in vain, and stretch out their hands all day long, and still death breaks down their barrier and bears away the heart of their hearts to the dark grave and the unseen spirit world ? Lord, Thy presence-chamber is yonder, but Thy creatures are here, and they love their fellow-creatures whom Thou hast given them ; and when Thou takest them away without ruth or stay, poor human hearts would die within them were it not that there is One who was lost and is found again. And He was no prodigal son, but the true *bien-aimé* of the Father. So they will go to their lost, and find them in the end, though their lost will not come back to them. My God, did the widow of


Sarepta stand silent before the other widows whose sons and daughters came no more into their bosoms, abase herself because of them, and weep sore for them? Lord, if I ever forget that those whom Thou hast smitten are among the apples of Thine eye, because even the sinful human mother's heart yearns most over her suffering child—then, Lord, forget me in my need. When we wish to hang our dogs we say they are mad; and when we wish to justify Thy mysterious ways to men, and to trade upon them for our own base profit, we slander Thy afflicted, and try to get our own of retaliation and revenge out of them. But Thou dost not want our villainous justifying, and Thou hatest our cruel kindness. Lord, if I am ever spiteful, malicious, and harsh towards Thy wounded ones—if I presume to treat with a high hand their groaning impatience, their sick waywardness, their sore

desperation, as the false friends of Job dealt with the woes of Thy servant of old—if I count up their offences and think to visit them on the offenders, and cause them to pay double for their sins in the day of their trouble, because their God is stripping and making them poor, that He may make them and many more rich—if I dare to sit in judgment on Thy miserables—then, Lord, smite me and strip me, before I lose altogether the image of my Maker, and go into a place of sterner punishment.”

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CHAPTER XI.

The Honourable George's Travelling Chariot.

HE dusky green of July and August had waxed and waned into the ruddy brown of October. The leaf-fingers of the chestnut, like the fists of a miser, were yellowing and shrivelling round the rich mahogany-tinted nuts; the beech trees were masses of crimson and scarlet in the low slanting sunbeams; while the few corn-fields among the pasture-lands, now reduced to stubble, were crackling under the feet of sportsmen. These effects of colour were dazzling and garish to Grand'mère, whose eyes had been early trained to the cool darkness of the pine and the dim blueness

of the olive ; but Yolande, with the affluence and elasticity of young life, was able to go abroad again, and even to face the slight sting of frost which made healthful the mellow air.

There was little inward change in the girl, save that with the enthusiasm of a prisoner or an invalid on his return to the free open world, she had a double relish for hardy out-door life and simple country pursuits. There was greater outward change. The blood, beginning to course afresh in the thin white cheeks, flushed them with a quickness and ardour, and tinged them with a brilliance which had not before lit up the subdued tone of her complexion. The formal roll of hair, in the fashion of Grand'mère's silver roll, had given place to the short, dark clusters which were all the fever had left on the shapely head. No round-eared cap with

dominant, imposing riband bow (though Yolande had added to this portion of her dress a starched ruff and tucker) could accord to these clusters the old, becoming air of sober wisdom and dignity. And what, indeed, if Yolande, grave and shy as she used to be, was a little thoughtless in the intoxication of her release from heavy discipline, and the thankfulness and cheerfulness of her convalescence! She was pretty sure to come to her senses speedily, and to go on more sedately than ever, with only a little more humility and a little more forbearance for others—a brighter chequer in her humour for all time to come, because of this short season of mirth of spirit which was like to verge on giddiness. Neither Grand'mère, nor even Madame herself, could find it in her heart to check Yolande sharply, and to put a stop to what was beneficial for the confirmation of her health.

before the severe gloomy English winter set in. Indeed, the older women at the Shottery Cottage were shaken out of their bland and austere rigidity by the dispensation of sickness. They would let the younger woman run off out of their sight on long walks and varied excursions, into the lanes for blackberries, among the hazels for filberts, and along sandy tracts of the Waäste for wild liquorice-roots, in no better company and with no greater protection than that of Milly Rolle, who had struck up a devoted friendship for Mademoiselle on her restoration to Sedge Pond society. Not even the return and brief sojourn of the family at the Castle could shake Milly's sudden passion for a bosom friend, by recalling her to her sworn allegiance to my lady. So Dolly, with the occasional assistance of Madame at the Rectory, was left alone to serve Lady Rolle, who never looked near the Shottery

Cottage, conducting herself as if her tenants there had been entirely brushed from her mind. "And a mighty good thing they were so, and not turned out of the cottage at twelve o'clock some stormy night, right into the sloppy village street," his honour, Mr. Lushington, was heard to cogitate.

Grand'mère was touched by the late-come fancy of one of the Rectory girls for a Dupuy.

"The poor red and white thing," she would soliloquise, "she grows up tender as that dear duck of a girl Deb, and that kind black dog Jasper. I love them all; and my Yolande loves, and is loved by them also, and becomes so much more human and sweet, so much less of a reserved, ascetic Protestant nun. For me, I like good ordinary girls, unassuming and unconscious, even with the faults of girls, like primroses and daisies with earth-stains upon them, and

not spoilt nuns, with pinched poverty of nature here, and rank passions there, like the twisted monstrous cacti of Mexico. As all the waters run together, and meet in the river, so girls ought to run together and meet in the humanity which grows and grows till its top reach the skies. There will be no confusion of tongues to break in upon and scatter it again, because of one tongue which spake as never man spake, and speaking once, speaks for ever. Neither will it be a perfect humanity of atoms and entities, but of all the families of the earth, where the girls will be girls, and the old women old women. I believe it, I hope it. It is not the usage of France, but for me I have not much more fear of the promenades of the *fillettes* than of the horse-gallop of the *garçon*. I ought to have less when the last is often a grand gallop to the hospital. The girls will card and colour

each other as the French calico weavers on the Thames and at Bromley Hall bend their threads of flax, to form one fair pattern. Go ! beat the parquet with the truth, unless it is reflected in the mirror of a fellow face. The red and white Milly is more interesting, and yet more *distrain*, than she used to be,—she is not such a mere spoilt child. The *petite*, again, is more of a child growing downwards or backwards, instead of upwards. But truly she can afford that, the wise child, and the price pays the piper. Better to spread out bushy and strong than to spring up into a maypole. *Là, là*, old Gèneviève, thou knowest it well. Chase away nature tripping on two feet, and behold she will come backing racing on four.”

But Grand'mère was more than dissatisfied, she was displeased and apprehensive, when she learnt from Yolande, who was discomfited and troubled in her turn, that

when the two younger women were out in their mantles and capuchins, their little baskets over their gloved arms, they were apt to meet Mr. George, from the Castle, in the most unexpected ways, and in the most opposite, unlikely directions. At least they were unlikely directions for a gentleman who, when at the Castle on former occasions, had been wont only to stroll in sleepy elegance towards the bridge about sunset, for the laudable purpose of affording the modicum of exercise necessary to his small friend and dog, or to saunter down, earlier in the day, to make the frequenters of the ale-house proud by looking on, and laying a bet on bowls and balls, to keep up his skill.

“You make no more promenades, whatever English modes may be,” cried Grand-mère, decisively, and somewhat tartly for her.

“But he is at present quite respectful and

gentle, Grand'mère," protested Yolande, puzzled and almost affronted. "Monsieur from the Castle says no longer 'little Dupuy,' but 'my very good mademoiselle.' He no longer picks up the trains—he carries only the baskets; though, do you know," she went on, whispering mysteriously, and with bashful importance, "he is the friend of Milly, as I think."

"A friend in truth!" exclaimed Grand'mère in increased indignation, under which she veiled her alarm. "I tell you that you make no more promenades, and I go to speak to the Rector about the friend of his daughter."

"Oh, what have I done?" urged Yolande in lively distress. "Milly will be in anguish, and so will I, because I shall have told tales on her, who has begun to have so much kindness towards me. They are tales, if not fancies, for she denies that she

has anything to do with milord, and she promises, if I am afraid, that she will never speak to him, nor let him come near us again, till he ask the permission of Monsieur the Rector. Do you understand, my good Grand'mère? It will be an afternoon of misfortune if you do not, and go and make your naughty child a pie of a tell-tale and slanderer of her friend. Trust to Milly, Grand'mère—you who are so full of trust and generosity. You have suffered me to go about the village with that Monsieur Richard—that young pastor,” she added, with a little sarcastic emphasis; “where, then, is the difference, when Milly has been brought up with Mr. George, as one may say, and when my lady his mother is her patroness and kinswoman? She is the next person who will be offended. *Misericorde!* I shall speak to Milly myself, if you wish it; I shall not cross the threshold

of the cottage, but shall watch my poor friend from the window of the garret, if that will do any good, and if you will not inform Monsieur, the Spartan father, whom Milly fears so terribly, though she loves him dearly."

Grand'mère saw that there was some reason in Yolande's remonstrance, and at the same time the old Frenchwoman had a modest sense that she could not be a perfect judge of manners in England. She let her better wit sleep, and refrained from farther interference in the matter, except what had to do with keeping her own child at home till the great Rolles should be off the *tapis*.

Grand'mère was confirmed in her forbearance by knowing that Milly Rolle was either prudently confining herself within the bounds of the Rectory, or was content to dawdle away her time and hang discon-

solately with Yolande over their samplers in the porch of the Shottery Cottage. When they were not thus engaged, they paced with arms intertwined round and round the narrow walk by the fish-pond. Grand'mère sought rather to warn the girls indirectly, while she amused them by queer proverbs, and by the invariable French legend of a wandering, impossibly beautiful, and benevolent princess, beset for the nonce by troops of wolves, each wolf taking the form of a light-headed, regardless fine gentleman.

Notwithstanding this, Grand'mère in her own person had something of the fool of quality, and was easily persuaded to discredit the existence of evil unless there was proof positive of the grievous fact. When Mr. George wound up his supposed meditation of mischief by paying unexpectedly a ceremonious visit to Grand'mère, the

infatuated Huguenot *bourgeoise* and Christian gentlewoman could not yet regard it as a piece of effrontery and an undue liberty, but took it for what he did not even pretend it to be—an atoning duty to wipe out his mother's desertion and condemnation. It would not have signified much what face Grand'mère had put on Mr. George's attention, unless her obstinate single-heartedness could have worked a miracle in piercing the thick skin of overweening vanity in the man. In defence of Grand'mère's security, it may be said that so far as Mr. George's deportment and conversation during his visit went, he might have hoodwinked Solomon himself, from the perfect inoffensiveness of his bearing and his topics, though they did not range so far as from sleeve-silk to predestination, but merely from chip hats to tambour needles.

Grand'mère, looking at and listening to the easy good-breeding of the slim, polished speaker, was inspired with the ambition of showing herself a genuine lady of the essence of Huguenotism and Christianity, since she represented the Household, Monsieur being shut up in his cabinet, Yolande sent out of sight, and Madame's hostility having become more and more of a mania. She could not think that there could be much in the *débonnaire* companionship any more than that force dwelt in the delicate hands with the five-pound ruffles fluttering over the knuckles. As the hands tapped the jewelled snuff-box, its very lid conveyed a prettily-concocted pinch of flattery, for it bore the choice miniature in enamel of the Duchess de Longueville, Grand'mère's loveliest countrywoman, who became a Janse-nist, if not a Huguenot. Grand'mère could have descanted by the hour on the

poor storm-torn rose of the Fronde wars ; and when the enthusiastic old woman found that Mr. George was making a rare collection of such miniatures to hand him down to future generations as an exquisite virtuoso, she readily undertook to procure him a priceless likeness of a Magdalene in a King's court, in Louise la Vallière. George Rolle would take "the goose," with Grand'mère's one ewe lamb to the bargain, if with all his idle prowling he could beguile to destruction a silly little animal. And Grand'mère was assailed on her weak side, and all her suspicions were lulled to sleep. As the best of us are apt to do in similar cases, she forgot that there was evidence—awful overwhelming evidence—that these fine hands would grip like claws, for the individual, and for the order, insolently and relentlessly, without stint or measure. These were the hands of languid, fantastic,

corrupt giants, not of puny dwarfs, as some have imagined.

At length the happy day arrived when the Rolles took their departure from the great arrogant white blot of a castle till the next election. My lady, the ruling passion strong in her leave-taking, chose to turn over her coaches to her sons for the present journey, and to make the journey herself by slow stages in her chair; for to be borne all the way to town, not by horses, but by men, was something novel, and fell in with her ladyship's mood.

Grand'mère had certainly a lucid interval in the delusion which was on the eve of receiving its death-blow; she breathed more freely when she heard that the progress of the quality was past and gone; she hummed "Marlbrook" in her shaking voice, and granted Yolande *carte blanche* to run out with Milly Rolle beyond the Shottory Cot-

tage garden-gate and the Sedge Pond village street.

That evening she went herself to call the children to supper, and walked as far as the garden-gate, to which old Squire Gage had come reading, as he rode, escorted by his goodly son, a summer ago. The scene recalled to Grand'mère's mind, as freely as yesterday, the group which had at first taken her fancy, and, as she paced up and down the short walk, she considered the disastrous blunder which she had made. Not that Grand'mère recognised the blunder; on the contrary, "It was the marriage the most *convenable*, the couple the most felicitous. I never had a happier idea," pondered the innocent offender.

The girls loitered, but Grand'mère did not weary. It was their time to loiter, as it was that of the last quinces to fall, the beet-root leaves to change to a purple-black, and the

brown autumn wall-flower and pale lilac and white leafless crocuses to offer rich, heavy floral incense, or wistful floral weeds for the year which was a-dying.

Grand'mère had a heart to hold all the seasons, though she loved the spring best, and looked a little pensively and shrinkingly on the autumn, because of the coming winter, with its nipping blasts, stark frosts, and winding-sheet of snow. For the old, however meek and resigned, want the images of life, and not those of death, and turn instinctively from the cold to the heat, from the shadow for which there is no longer need, to the sunshine which cannot bask broadly enough for them. But Grand'mère perfectly understood and submitted to the fact that, while the budding hope of spring was for her consolation, Yolande in her own spring must be unsympathetic, and must stretch after the distant and unknown, delighting in fulfilled bounty and

brooding repose. She could pace the garden road contentedly with Madame Rougeole as a safe recipient for an occasional soliloquy. She did not wonder that the empty harvest-fields, with their purpose now finished and forsaken, had no sadness for Yolande, and that she could stay and chatter with Milly Rolle, as the mist rose from the slow river, carrying hoariness to the very uplands of the Waäste, and bearing nothing but the seeded stalks of heath-flowers, inasmuch as her foot had trod swiftly among the cuckoo-flowers and the oxslips where they wafted the sweeter breath, and were the more richly golden for pearls of May dew. Grand'mère's thoughts were all tranquil and happy. Even when they turned to the spread supper-table within the house, it was with a pleasant recognition of the security, sufficiency, and domestic joy which were associated with the homely images of strings of roasted birds

and rows of fried trout, and such Médoc as could be got in England, to replace indifferently the brown ale ; with the jauntiness of Monsieur and the sombreness of Madame both tempered to Grand'mère by the strongest, simplest devotion, and with the light of Yolande's young face and the sociality of Milly Rolle's rattling tongue.

A hurried tap came to the garden-door, and Grand'mère cried gaily, "Who goes there? Enter the grand Mademoiselle," though she knew the shuffling step was only that of Deborah Pott, who had come seeking Mademoiselle Yolande to look over her task of burnishing the pewter vessels in the house before they should be submitted to the lynx eyes of Prie. Indeed, to relieve Deb's oppression and anxiety more than her own, Grand'mère had dispatched the girl to look out for her young mistress.


But when Deborah appeared with all her

new garments flying behind her, her very hair standing on end and streaming back from her shock head under her loosened cap, with her ungainly arms swinging, her splay feet clattering, her teeth chattering, and the horror of her news bursting from her fixed eyes as well as her quivering lips, Grand'mère was arrested and petrified.

“Murder!—murder! old Madam!” struggled out Deb, in explanation; “young madam—both the young madams be carried away and undone.”

CHAPTER XII.

The Shottery Cottage at Bay.

“ SEE'D them with my own eyes,”
Deb went on to account for her wild statement, “a-walking and a-talking and a-laughing like childer, coming down Pedlar’s Lane with their hands full o’ trash. When right a’foot o’ the lane, there was summut under the split elm, what a’ took for a waggon, but it proved no waggon, nobbut a charyot. And out of it sprang a tall man as thof he were awaiting for the young mistresses, and he spread out his arms and stopped the passengers. Hey! but they fell a-cryin’ and a-trying to pass him, leastways our young madam, as put out her bits of

hands and pushed him back, a' ne'er thought she had such force."

"*Tiens !*" cried Grand'mère, with a flash from her grey eyes ; "and you did not fly to her, and fight for her ! She went to you, my big girl."

"A'd a gone as sure as deeth," protested Deb, "thof a'd a-been smashed and brained and hanged and quartered ; but with that, driver and postboys came swarming out from the charyot and the elm. One 'hind and the rest afore, and closed the lasses round, while my gentleman lifted and dragged them intil charyot. And off they drove afore a poor body would say, 'By your leave.' You believe me, Madam Grand'mère ? More by token an' a' had not bidden still, there would have been none to run with the bad news and give the alarm."

Grand'mère took no comfort from the conclusion, and failed to commend Deb for

her discretion. She forgot everything in her deadly sickness at this greatest calamity which had befallen her—a calamity to which death itself would have been light.

“The Monsieur, the gentleman! Speak, child, and kill me! It was some stranger, some audacious traveller for a frolic. *Oui-dà*, the girls will be free again before this; they will be skipping home to us now. But it was a bad jest, without doubt, still only a jest; it was not——”

“Dunnot take on so,” besought the commiserating Deb. “Now, I’ll tell you all, and not keep you waiting. It were one of our own quality, more’s the pity, as left the Castle yesterday. T’were Mr. George hissen. A’ know’d him by’s clean-scraped cheeks, like a black-a-vised wench’s, by the colour of’s sodgering coat, and the black riband round’s neck; t’other’s older and stouter, and wears a cravat, and a’ know’d

him by's own man Master Harry, as wears the two watches and—waly! is the loosest liver in the parish—after my lord, and my lord's brother.”

“A place of dragons!” cried poor Grand-mère, putting out her hand, and feeling her way back to the house, as if she had been sun-struck in the cool autumn sunset. “Go, girl,” she continued, “go to the Rectory—and tell the pastor his daughter is gone, how, and with whom. He is not an old woman, a stranger and a foreigner like me; he may lead a pursuit, and my son will follow when he returns from the *veloutière*—ah! what say I?—from the Waäste, where he went to shoot the little birds. He will feel fatherly now that his stock is smitten at the core. He has his honour, his human feeling, under his scheming trader's and *émigré's* skin. And my little bird, saved from the bolt of the destroyer only to fall

into the snare of the fowler, and to die twice over, dishonoured and murdered! Did I keep the child cruelly for this? My selfish greed of her, is it thus heavily punished? Would to God I had died for thee, Yolandette! Would to God thou hadst died singly, securely, in the house of thy father, tended by thy mother!"

Bear in mind that these "good old times" which Wesley and Whitfield, and at a later date Wilberforce, troubled, as the prophet Elijah troubled Israel, were times when the carrying off of women, and the hiding of them in lonely houses and remote inns, were crimes actually possible and occasionally practised in England. Single acts of barbarous unrighteousness and brutality remained to impress upon men how gradual is the civilization and Christianization of a nation—how men may hang up their broadswords and stab with walking rapiers, how

great towns may be taken and not put to a general sack, and solitary weak women may be decoyed or lifted away by force from the seclusion of panelled parlours and the publicity of tea-gardens, to be cast out at last like dogs. It was a far more frightful blow for an honest man and woman to hear that a young daughter had been seized by the violence of man and whirled off in a chariot, than that she had quietly sickened and died by the visitation of God. If she had been stopped on a lonely by-way, a rescue was hardly to be expected; if on a frequented high-road, a hundred idle tongues would be set a-wagging, and would babble away the good name and the fair fame, which a breath could sully, past redemption in this world. At the best, when the last unspeakable wrong was escaped, it was with the bloom and the dew of what should have been the sacred frankness and fearless-

ness of girlhood gone for ever. No lot was left to the victim but either to hang her head and pine for her misfortune, or to brazen out its disgrace until the ill name hanged the poor dog driven desperate, or the brand ate into and tainted the soul itself, and what had begun in harsh slander ended in actual wickedness. Sooner would the fondest father and mother, not sold to the vile tampering with evil and the base time-serving which characterised the "good old times" on their worst side,—sooner would they have consented to see the favourite daughter, the house-pet, lying a stony figure on her bier.

France was not so different from England in this respect that Grand'mère did not comprehend the full bearing of the truth. She could not but cry, "Would to God I had died, or Yolande had been suffered to die when the innocent death of girlhood

was at the door, rather than have lived to awaken the cruel fancy of a fine gentleman!"

When the awful news spread, it was not Monsieur, but the Rector, who was found to be from home. He was away preaching an assize sermon, thirty miles off, at the nick of time when one of his cherished daughters had become the prey of worse than a highwayman. Her sister Dolly was hardly more astounded, incredulous, helpless, and hysterical than was Madam her mother, when the primitive messenger rushed past Black Jasper with his solemn marshalling, and without pause or preparation did her best to drop a shell into the Rectory parlour, where Madam was no more appropriately occupied than seeking to win Dolly from a fit of moping by a dish of chocolate.

"An it please you, Pearson's Madam—and I'se warrant it will please none of you," began Deb, with an ominous shake to her

unruly apron and voluminous cap—" Mistress Milly, as is thick with our young madam at the Shottery Cottage, be run off with, along with t'other, this here blessed sundown, a'foot o' Pedlars' Lane, and I be sent to tell you."

"Alake! alake! my Milly, and papa from home; but sit you quiet, my Dolly," got out poor Madam, distractedly. "What harm have the horses done the girls? I have cordials and linen at hand. Conduct me to my child, my good girl; this faintness will go so soon as I have set eyes on her."

"Anan! There be no horse in the play, saving the horses in the charyot, and they were druve by worser than horses, marm— by wicked men. Mr. George from the Castle, he had a hand in the running off with the young madams. A's take my Bible oath on what a' see'd. But as to lead-

ing you to the hiding hole—it were not the Castle—he knowed a better trick than that, and he bade driver take the opposite road. To find that’s the pothor, Madam ; and that’s what we are in the pickle about to-night at the Shottory Cottage. Old Madam had howped as how Pearson were the man to raise the hue and cry—his own daughter being gone and done for.”

Milly to be run off with by Mr. George, on her return from the most ordinary country tramp!—this was a new and thoroughly bewildering light thrown on an accident. Surely, if the story were true, it could only be in the way of the noblest promotion to Milly, though the banns had not been published, and my lady would cut the rash couple dead, and not hesitate to implicate, in the unjustest manner, and thenceforth to hate and persecute cruelly, the whole Rectory family.

Notwithstanding these depressing considerations, the devoted, silly woman—good and gentle as she was—was ready to plume herself on her daughter's runaway match with a member of the proudest quality. But there were drawbacks to this conviction. It was odd and incongruous somehow to think of Mr. George as one of a passionate, imprudent young couple. Madam at the Rectory was not slow in believing the most extravagant compliment to her daughter's charms; but Mr. George had not been any way conspicuous in his languid mocking attentions to his rustic kinswoman, unless whispering to her once or twice in corners during his last visit to the Castle were to take the place of the elaborate courtships Madam had been accustomed to. Then what of little Dupuy, the French ma'mselle, whose concern in the scandal Madam had at first forgotten, but whose presence, when

she recalled it, was an additional stumbling-block to a satisfactory explanation of the mystery? What was to be made of her? Was it necessary to spirit her from the scene, create a greater sensation, and complicate the matter for the mere purpose of doing honour to Milly's foolish liking for her by electing her to be witness and best maid on the interesting occasion, in room of the pouting, flouncing Dolly? And, oh dear! if Milly were mad enough, and the Honourable George bad enough, simply to drive about the country to show themselves to the public, without any more proper protector and companion than Milly's French friend! In this light the calamity was infinitely worse than the failure in the summer dish of gooseberry fool, or the tearing of the Rector's surplice. It would be beyond Madam's power, even if it came within her duty, to conceal this scrape from the Rector. For

once in her life the timid, distraught, ignorant lady would soundly rate her dear girl, Milly, had she but her tongue on her again.

At the Shottery Cottage the dreadful disaster which had befallen the Dupuy family worked in the peculiar way adversity sometimes works in turning the world of character upside down, and doing away with previous impressions.

To begin with the kitchen. Big Prie, having resisted the first frantic inclination to set out after the most monstrous of robbers, subsided tamely into a shocked, appalled elderly woman, shaking all over, and even whimpering feebly for the loss of generous, guileless young Madam. She left it to the young blood of the raw Deb Pott to rise to the occasion, and show a genius not only for open-eyed observation, but for staunch adherence to a trail, and daring excursions right and left to authenticate it. If Deb did

not rise like a phoenix, certainly in one single hour she was drawn from her slough of brutal ignorance into an uncouth but very genuine woman ; the orphan and drudge was transplanted into the solid if somewhat rough ground-work of a good, faithful, rudely-sagacious creature. Prie, who in her gaunt gruffness could not bend or mould to new requirements, or create resources for unthought-of necessities, at once, by the law of nature, succumbed and deferred. But it must be said she was too miserable about the daughter of the house to be jealous of the elevation of her subordinate. She only dully wondered at “ her as couldn’t ha’ telled her right hand from her left, or a farthing candle from a fourpenny mould, growing so spry all of a sudden.” Now and then she would give a fling of aimless, peevish rage when Deb, who was stolid and coarse though honest, and had the making

of a noble woman in her, dared, with gross want of delicate tact, to compare their pure, kidnapped, concealed ma'nselle to the wretched women (and Deb had heard of many of them even in her short life) who, with scant ceremony and charity, were sentenced to a fatally blighted life.

Madame Dupuy was passive, and stricken dumb in her insulted and outraged womanhood. Her thunder had been all spent in the fine weather, so that there was no strength left in her for the storm; she did not reproach Grand'mère with short-sighted magnanimity, she did not even denounce the perfidious English and the licentious quality: she reviled the world and reflected on Providence no more.

It was Monsieur, the man of the world, the cynical philosopher, whose sallow cheek grew green, grew black, who stormed and foamed and turned his back and wept hot

tears like sparks of fire. “The mother’s child, the old woman’s darling, her picture if we lost her,—and I was not there to save the little one ! But I will have justice *coûte que coûte*. I know, though I am a *roturier* of a Huguenot tradesman, that there is one justice for the quality and another for the commonalty in this fine country of England. But there is justice, such as it is, and the quality are left to themselves sometimes, and cry *halte là !* at each other’s sins, and hold them up to open punishment.”

It was Grand’mère, the sweet-tempered, buoyant-spirited old gentlewoman, whose brave heart failed her, whose tender conscience told her terrible things, whose firm faith reeled under the shock. Grand’mère took cognisance of all her own confiding rashness which had set at nought the mother’s jealous foresight and stern precaution, what she called her *romanesque* folly, which

had brought ruin to her family. She knew that Monsieur could not be silent on his injury, but was forced to make grievous explanations and furious inquiries, and with her quick wit she saw that the world of Sedge Pond did him monstrous wrong. Because he was yellow and sodden in his heaviness, instead of bluff and hearty, because his expletives were safely strange and incomprehensible, and his best English accent worse than that of any Welshman or Scotchman, because his spluttering frenzy was in as great a contrast to what would have been a John Bull's choking dignity as it was to his own wonted half-sardonic blandness,—because of all this, the villagers thrust their tongues into their cheeks, and derided the unhappy man. With a brutal irreverence for human nature and infidelity to it, they called the whole story a French manœuvre; and for Yolande, who had been

their sister of charity, and over whom, when they thought her on her death-bed, they had shaken their heads with some stupid approach to awe and tenderness, they now called her a French slut; and the only person to be pitied in their view of the affair, was the idle, set-up hussy, the parson's daughter, who would go gadding in indifferent company.

This wanton misconception filled Grand'mère with dismay. True, the object of it was to the world only a middle-aged, scheming man, with the doubtfulness of a cloud over his interests and engagements; but he was to her a son, her only son, who had been devoted and dutiful—too loyal, indeed, to breathe a whisper of Grand'mère's froward interposition for the purpose of opposing his and my Lady Rolle's sovereign will, which had it been accomplished would have at least placed Yolande under powerful protection.

Grand'mère contemplated her Hubert setting out single-handed, in the darkness of the unprovoked deadly destruction of the family peace, to search for a lost daughter, his only child. She had a lamentable vision of Yolande, her shy, modest, sensitive child, brought in a moment to a crisis of fear, grief, and shame, quaking and quivering, and wild with distraction of unbelief.

“My daughter-in-law,” besought Grand'mère, creeping and clinging to Madame, with her voice broken and shivered to a vibrating shrillness, “chide me, accuse me, that my God may spare me, and be spared to me. I had sooner know myself a miserable culprit, and consent to lay down my grey hairs in a coffin of infamy, than think that he had forsaken the child who trusted in Him. My God ! keep her from thinking so. For the dark places of the earth are full of horrible cruelty, and Thou knowest

and sufferest it. Innocent women have been foully maltreated and barbarously done to death ere now in Thy sight and hearing, and Thou hast not interfered and opened the earth to swallow up their persecutors and murderers. What can we do? Hearest thou, Philippine! Blame me, condemn me! lest I or the child curse God and die!”

But Madame remained true to her faith, her instinct and education; her trust in God and her homage to the old mother forming an oasis of docility and gentleness in the arrogance and violent antagonism of her nature. In its inspiration Madame could even argue and plead with the guileless guile of love: “No, no, little mother, thou wert always our good angel, hers and ours. Not true, *ma mère*; if the wolves had not found one way of eating us up, they would have found another. Courage, Grand’mère, call

back thy forces under the good God. Poor, miserable ones that we are, we hang upon thee. Thy son, thy daughter Yolande—more yours than my husband's and mine—who will cure her hurt and wash away her stain, if she survive and return to us, save the wise, tender old woman? Thou knowest that I am but a rod in pickle at the best." Sustained and raised on the strong tower of devotion and duty, Madame in the hour of trial thus re-assured and comforted Grand'mère: " 'The wrath of man shall praise him,'—shall a Huguenot doubt it? In the *aïgues-mortes* our women suffered the utmost, but it was only their bodies, which the Apostle called vile in the beginning. After it would have been all over with the women of the world, who have no souls to speak of, the souls of our saints soared away out of great tribulation, with wings as of eagles, like snow-birds washed white in

the stream of His blood, to hover round the great white throne. The soul of Yolandette! how can the caitiff so much as smirch it with a finger-spot, Grand'mère?"

Monsieur had driven away from the ale-house in one of the high yellow gigs of the time, so crazy an equipage that there was more danger of its being tilted up, dashing Monsieur out, and leaving his busy brains on the highway, than of his overtaking the chariot.

After the night of misfortune had drawn a veil of autumn darkness over the confusion and dismay which prevailed, and another day had risen, Grand'mère received several acknowledgments of the evil which had befallen her. The first was a card from Lady Rolle, who had not more than reached the first country-house on the line of her magnificently slow and troublesome progress. It contained only the lines—

“You would not accept my proposal, Madam, and you see what has come of your insolent integrity. I wash my hands of the business. My son has merely done what might have been looked for from him to you, and I suppose now you expect me to interfere and remedy the mischief; but you will find yourself mightily mistaken. As you and the humbled minx have made your bed, so you can lie on’t. I have told you I wash my hands of the business. I have to add that I never repent of my decisions.

“Your obedient servant,

“AUDREY ROLLE.”

Finely strung and keenly susceptible as Grand-mère’s temperament was, she had no pained resentment to spare for this vindictive taunt.

“God have pity on you, miladi, who thus trample upon me, who am cast down,” she

said, dismissing the subject; “for the great Lord God repents Him sometimes of the misery which sinners bring upon themselves.”

Then Mr. Lushington was shown into the Shottery Cottage parlour, his very brow under his curls suffused with warm red, and at the same time beaded with cold perspiration. His round eyes, bedded in fat, were struggling in their tight sockets for the first time in the course of their existence; his firm calves were shaking like jelly: he stood there an honest man in the grievous awkwardness and genuine distress of having been betrayed and shamed by those whom he had delighted to honour, and whose representative he had been proud to be.

“Madam,” he said, retreating instead of advancing when he saw that Grand’mère did not look angrily at him, but looked only a pitiably-stricken woman, “I’d as lief touch a live coal as take your hand. Couldn’t, raley,

Madam ; it ud burn me to the bone. Law ! to think our family should have been so left to themselves as to put a finger on Ma'mselle that my lady our own mother noticed and had up at the Castle. But Ma'mselle were too good for our rackets, and we're more left to ourselves than ever. It is my solemn conviction, old Madame Duppy, that we are going right out of hand to perdition. Sharp's the word, and here's the sign. The last time I was here, you mind, I was apologising profoundly for evening the lass to the likes of my company, and her too good for this world and fit for the company of the angels. Yet the modest saint bethought herself of me, and sent me a kind, sweet wench's message, 'I wish with all my heart I were his little daughter,' 'And I wish the same, miss,' answer I, though I am not worthy. God sen' she may not want a friend. But I affright you, Madam, as I honestly credit,

without cause. I crave your pardon ; and I came here with another intention."

"You help me by your kindness of heart, Maître Lushington, for I trust your goodness," said Grand'mère.

"I only came here to tell you that our Mr. George, let him be a selfish sneering rake, though I should not say it, and have never said it before, is not a devil outright to abuse his ill-gotten power to the worst. There is proof of it in his carrying away young Madam from the Rectory, along with your lass to keep her company and blindfold the public. Rolle, who provokes t'other as a mastiff worries a bull terrier, has been twitting him with Ma'mselle's fine scorn and independence, and what not, when he tried on his game in forgathering with her and Parson Philip's gay madam, and he has snatched her beyond reach to play it out at closer quarters. But he is not a brute or a

devil, is Mr. George; he and his order are light of mind at this time of day; the whole set be never clean in earnest unless on the rights of the quality and the English."

"It is always the English for the English, my good friend," put in Grand'mère, to fill up a pause occasioned by the superabundance of her visitor's fat.

"Yes, by the Billy, if you will believe it, Mr. George himself fires finely on that. A proud fool have I been to hear him and Rolle speak up in Parliament, at 'lections, and when they were trouncing the French—no offence—doing honour to the old stock. I'm fain to own it were all the honour they did it, for I care nought, not I, for their squalling furrin singers, no better than they should be, their bits of brass and rags of tapestry, and their cracked brown picters in ship-loads, with ne'er a red and white cheek, a blue sky, or a cornicoper of

gold in the lot. I leave that to a polished, knavish blackguard like my lord's Tony, or an impudent scoundrel like Mr. George's Harry, who pretends to be as thick in the plot for rickety furniture and rusty iron as his master. The dickens ! when I think of the power of grand sticks of trees and heavy stacks of corn they've cost my lady, and how they and the desperate evil of play are at the bottom of the orders to sell out every back-going tenant and press every yeoman who will pay with his last groat afore he will quit the fields where his childer have been born and their feyther afore them, I could find it in my heart to smash and burn the toys."

"Oh," said Grand'mère, more to herself than to her companion, "how these quality sacrifice their peace of mind for draughts of pleasure that burn but never satisfy."

"Howsomever," Master Lushington went

on, “you have heard what Mr. George is—a *petty mater* in your native tongue, as I’ve heard often enough gabbled to little profit, and no reflection on you, old madam. This adventure is but a piece of wicked play to him, and there being a couple of ladies, you may depend upon it he’s gone no farrer than to a friend’s empty house, or to a quiet country inn, within a circuit of ten miles. Well, but Ma’mselle has sense and spirit, as well as beauty and honesty, and will resist our gentleman’s becks and bows, and gifts of smuggled silks and jewellery, by way of atonement and peace-offering. So, cheer up, for while she is amusing him with the stubbornness of her virtuous resentment, she will get a letter sent by a safe hand, or succeed in screeching out of a winder, or waving a kercher to a friend. What will remain then but the fright and the fine word of being run away with?”

“Ah, but the fright is the smallest part of the evil, Maître Lushington,” broke in Grand’mère.

“Nay, but my tongue butters no pars-nips,” added he, bluntly; “I own candidly it is none of a fine, but a very ugly word; let that satisfy you that I speak the truth. Yet I can tell you this—that plain folk know the quality and our family, and will not come down thumping hard on a brush as might not be escaped. One thing I’m woundy glad of,—that I could not make up my mind to give our family the go-by, and leave it to shift for itself, after a life’s service, till the last moment. For so it have left me the coat which will get me a hearing and an entrance at a hunder turns, to which Monseer dare not set his nose, or come back blooded in that ere feater. Wear the Rolle livery, in order to ferret out a Rolle and his misdeed? Not a doubt

of it, Madame Duppy. I wish to goodness I had allers done it as much credit. Moreover, by your leave, I may come down lighter than another, for all our sakes, on the sinner,—say than Monseer might be frantic enough to do, when he came to small swords or pocket-pistols with Mr. George—he's a clever man at that practice—if Monseer's life were worth a farden's purchase, whether he won or lost the dool. But there is no chance of such a meeting, old Madam—not the least in the world; and as for danger to an old soldier of a butler like me, hoity toity! there is a lining to this coat"—and Mr. Lushington fingered some papers in his pocket, impressively—"which it dunnot become me to mention, but in consideration of them dirty papers, my lady herself, in her worst tantrums, will not have me arrested, or caned, or set in the stocks, neither for contempt of autho-

rity, default of service, or misuse of livery. Pay no heed, madam."

The effect of worthy Mr. Lushington's weighty practical arguments, delivered with much elaboration and expense of wind, was a happy one on Grand'mère. The strait was a sore one, but even one such staunch friend was not to be despised.

Mr. Hoadley's ardent friendship actuated him in an opposite fashion. He renounced Lord Rolle's chaplaincy, or was dismissed from it, he could not be quite sure which, the moment that the news of the escapade found Lord Rolle, perforce escorting his mother, with a shocking bad grace, to town, having commanded the attendance of both chaplain and physician to share the burden of my lady's tempers and whims.

Mr. Hoadley had walked unsummoned and unannounced into the library of the great house at which my lady had stopped,

where in studious affectation of study, and in night-gown and slippers, Lord Rolle was to be seen immersed and engrossed in the contents of an ebony cabinet full of inventories, household books, and recipes which he was privileged to examine.

“My Lord, I have come to tell you, as a man and a Christian——” burst out Mr. Hoadley.

“My good fellow,” interrupted Lord Rolle, quickly, while he carefully marked his place with his tooth-pick, “as a man and a Christian, I have seen for some time that we don’t suit. There is a cheque for your salary. Say no more about it. Don’t bore me, and oh! pray, don’t bore Fidèle. You know, Fidèle cannot forgive a brutal entrance. See how she snuffs and snarls,” pointing to his weasel-faced satellite in her basket. “I doubt if she would ever have taken you into favour again, and I can’t

abide any of my people failing to be on good terms with my dog of dogs. But before you go, you who have not sat so late, reverend sir, or tried your poor eyes so prodigiously with polite society—though you used to be fond enough of a spare seat at the faro table, till the rhino failed, or you thought to try the pious dodge—hey! Parson Hoadley!—lend me your aid to make out this word ‘consumed—consummate coxcomb.’ ”

“‘Consommé of cockscombs,’ my Lord; I was not aware that your eyes were so affected. I take leave to inform you that I shall go before the next justice and depose to what I know of this infamous act of treachery and violence, and compel him,—yes, my Lord, compel him to take steps to bring the atrocious perpetrator—were he the Duke of York or of Gloucester—under the law’s dreadest penalty for a detestable crime.”

“Softly, my man,” said Rolle, quite sweetly, drawing his fingers through his scratch wig, then letting them drop in a pose among the lace of his cravat. “Don’t you think a magistrate who would send one of the royal dukes to swing at Tyburn would be a rarer monster even than Sir William Gascoigne? ‘Consommé,’ was it? ‘consommé of cockscombs’—a charming dish, I am sure. What a ridiculous mistake I had gone near to perpetrate; ha! ha! ha! it tickles me to think of it—appropriate too. ‘Consumed coxcomb,’ ha! ha! yaw! yaw! Good day to you, Parson Hoadley; I have the honour to wish you a very good day, sir.”

Parson Hoadley did not credit that his blood was boiling when he told Grand’mère, in the poor fellow’s magniloquence, that he had not called down the vengeance of Heaven on his patrons, but that in obedi-

ence to His orders he had prayed for his mortal enemies. Also he declared that he would go to the world's end armed with the Word of God alone, to reclaim and restore the victim, however infatuated and perverted, whom he would not trust himself to name.

Yet virtually he named her, and the question remains whether it was characteristic of Mr. Hoadley's temperament or of the views which he had imbibed and held manfully ever afterwards, that while he had loved Yolande Dupuy with as true a fervour of man's love as ever at once troubled and dignified a face now keen, now listless, he could yet term her a victim, while his honour Mr. Lushington would not name her, and could infer infatuation and perversion on her part, and reclaiming and recovery on his own.

Grand'mère loved this young man, and understood him better than he understood

himself. She was sunk under her torture, but she could not stand this tone, bred of conceit, irritability, weakness, and faithlessness to human nature. She could have stamped with her high-heeled shoe, and cried, "Go, then, give her up. Be the first to doubt and turn upon her, under pretence of righteousness and charity. It was always the way with the poet, with the priest, and the Levite."

And now there were only the Gages of the Mall to encounter. The Gages were at too great a distance to be roused and appalled by the earliest report of the Dupuys' calamity; but the old Squire would doubtless take the trouble to ride over to the Shottery Cottage, and condole from the bottom of his heart with the distracted family.

Grand'mère could not refrain from reflecting a little bitterly on the Gages, and

weaving unpalatable, unwholesome fancies concerning them. The father and the son might have saved the Dupuys a world of terror, sorrow, and humiliation by meeting, as frankly as it had been made, what was in Grand'mère's eyes her perfectly modest, discreet, suitable plan of disposing of Yolande. Had the bowls been permitted to roll fairly, long ere this a gracious affection, a pure and honourable love, would have sprung up and flourished under the most serene and sacred countenance and shield, and united the young pair in indissoluble bonds. Not even a Rolle of the Castle would have ventured to disturb the peace, and trespass on the dignity of young Madam Gage of the Mall, nay, of the contracted wife of young Squire Gage—a different person in the neighbourhood from Ma'mselle, the French silk weaver's daughter at the Shottery Cottage.

Again, Squire Gage and his son, good as

they were, might in their English surliness hold themselves excused for feeling thankful that they had resisted a temptation, and been saved from a pitfall. How could they be supposed to be nobler than the young pastor in exalting the goods which they had been the first to decry by their rejection? Would they not rather twitch the collars of their coats, rub their hands, and talk of foreign fashions, and their being well quit of them? Few men or women in the world were more free from spite and rancour than Grand'mère, but in the mystery, mortification, and misery of Yolande's forced elopement, she did bear a grudge against the Gages, against Fletcher of Madeley's friend, the devout, charitable old Squire of the Mall.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.



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